

Hope Incarnate: A Systematic Theological Investigation in conversation with
Jürgen Moltmann and Russel Botman.



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Being a research paper submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree
of Master of Theology in systematic theology, ecclesiology and ethical studies
in the faculty of theology at Stellenbosch University

Declaration

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Date: March 2020

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Abstract

The title of this study, *Incarnate Hope*, suggests a possible link between hope and embodied action, between hope and transformation. This implies, among other things, that for hope to be understood adequately, in a theological way, its relationship to the incarnate Christ is of critical importance. This study provides a critical reflection in search of a Christologically grounded account of Christian hope that serves as a challenge to reductive understandings of hope in ecclesiastical and societal discourses.

In the light of this emphasis, this study engages with the question: What theological insights can be gained from Moltmann and Botman in the search for the contours of an understanding of Christian hope that links hope to transformative action? The study proposes that Moltmann and Botman's engagement with the notion of hope is productive for the development of an embodied, transformational and Christologically shaped account of hope.

For this purpose, chapter 2 provide a brief analysis of how hope is often understood and how it is practiced in a reductive way, resulting in what is described as cheap hope. Chapter 3 then explores the contributions that Moltmann's Christology, ethics and eschatology can make to a better understanding of an incarnate hope. The way in which a theology of hope and an ethics of hope is interlinked in his broader theological study receive special attention. Different but not totally dissimilar to the engagement with Moltmann, chapter 4 discusses how Botman provides a specific reflection on how the future reign of God is linked to discipleship and transformation. The final chapter (chapter 5) draws on the work of Moltmann and Botman to provide possible contours for an account of "incarnate hope" that link theology and ethics, hope and action, hope and transformation.

Opsomming

Die titel van hierdie studie, *Incarnate Hope*, suggereer 'n moontlike skakel tussen hoop en beliggaamde aksie, tussen hoop en transformasie. Dit impliseer onder andere dat die verhouding tot die geïnkarneerde Christus van kritieke belang is om hoop op 'n teologiese manier na behore te kan verstaan. Hierdie studie bied 'n kritiese refleksie op soek na 'n Christologies-gebaseerde verstaan van Christelike hoop wat dien as 'n uitdaging vir reduktiewe begrip van hoop in kerklike en samelewingsdiskoerse.

In die lig van hierdie nadruk handel hierdie studie oor die vraag: Watter teologiese insigte kan verkry word van Moltmann en Botman in die soeke na die kontoere van 'n begrip van die Christelike hoop wat hoop verbind tot transformatiewe handeling? Die studie stel voor dat Moltmann en Botman se betrokkenheid by die idee van hoop produktief is vir die ontwikkeling van 'n beliggaamde, transformerende en Christologiese vorm van hoop.

Vir hierdie doel gee hoofstuk 2 'n kort analise van hoe hoop dikwels verstaan word en hoe dit op 'n reduktiewe manier beoefen word, wat lei tot wat beskryf word as “goedkoop hoop”. Hoofstuk 3 ondersoek vervolgens die bydraes wat Moltmann se Christologie, etiek en eskatologie kan lewer om 'n beter begrip van 'n geïnkarneerde hoop te lewer. Die manier waarop 'n teologie van hoop en 'n etiek van hoop in sy breër teologiese studie gekoppel word, kry veral aandag. In hoofstuk 4 word bespreek hoe Botman, op 'n wyse wat ooreenstem en verskil met Moltmann, 'n spesifieke besinning bied oor hoe die komende heerskappy van God gekoppel is aan dissipelskap en transformasie. Die laaste hoofstuk (hoofstuk 5) gebruik die werk van Moltmann en Botman om moontlike kontoere te verskaf vir 'n weergawe van 'geïnkarneerde hoop' wat teologie en etiek, hoop en handeling, hoop en transformasie, verbind.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Scope of the study

This study seeks to provide a critical reflection in search of a Christologically grounded account of Christian hope that serves as a challenge to reductive understandings of hope in ecclesiastical and societal discourses. In the process, concrete lived realities are privileged over against vague and abstract accounts of hope. The concept of “incarnate hope” serves to promote human action that will be directed towards the transformation of human conditions through hope-giving actions, thus, the importance of the link between hope and action, or hope and transformation. “Incarnate hope” challenges contemporary ideas that generalise hope or limit it to something that can only be expected in the far future or which is seen as mere optimism.

The title, *Incarnate Hope*, suggests a possible link between hope and embodiment. This implies, among other things, that for hope to be understood adequately, in a theological way, its relationship to the incarnate Christ is of critical importance.

This study will seek to demonstrate the move from these general ideas of hope to a hope that is Christologically grounded by hosting a conversation that discusses Jürgen Moltmann’s vision of an eschatological, Christological and ethical hope and Russel Botman’s vision of a transformative hope which is shaped by discipleship and hopeful agency inspired by the imitation of Christ. In the subtitle of this study Moltmann and Botman are therefore indicated as the primary conversation partners. The choice of Moltmann and Botman are motivated by the fact that both of them are Protestant intellectuals with a strong focus on ethics, Christology, eschatology and hope. Amidst these overlaps one can, however, also point to differences in their styles of theology. Botman’s thought, for instance, is less systematically developed and often responded to contemporary challenges in a more *ad hoc* – albeit pertinent – way. Moltmann, on the other hand, developed an elaborate constructive theology – addressing in the process specific theological, political and social issues.

Richard Bauckham describes Jürgen Moltmann as “one of the most influential contemporary German Protestant theologians in the non-western as well as the western world, and in broader church circles as well as in academic theology” (Bauckham, 2005:147). Moltmann’s theology rests on his dialectical interpretation of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is grounded in a particular form of Trinitarian theology that became the overarching principle of his work. This emphasis forms the basis of his *Theology of Hope* which will be discussed in

depth in chapter three of this study. In light of this important and influential work, Moltmann is rightly called “the father of a theology of hope” (Bauckham, 2005:148).

Moltmann’s theology of hope is built on his strong conviction that there is an inseparable relationship between hope and embodiment. This relationship is, for instance, evident in his book *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1993) in which he explains “Jesus’ incarnation as hope brought to life (Moltmann, 1993:25). Moltmann is confident in his promotion of this relationship as he draws concrete evidence from Jesus’ social impact in the New Testament. For Moltmann, Jesus’ acts of compassion and love, his protest against injustice, and his solidarity with the suffering and the poor are all actions of hope. In his social life Jesus brought to life a hope that people would experience every day. This idea of embodied hope has also been given great emphasis in Moltmann’s more recent work, *Ethics of Hope* (2010), in which he offers an ethical framework on how to live in the present to save the future from destruction by humanity itself. *Ethics of Hope* can be seen as a complement to Moltmann’s most prominent work, *Theology of Hope*.

Russel Botman, in turn, was a South African Reformed pastor, theologian, ecumenical figure and educational pioneer. Theologically speaking, Botman was influenced particularly by the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and by Latin American liberation theology. Botman’s focus on hope, which we will discuss in depth in chapter four, lies primarily on how a theology and pedagogy of hope forms the basis of transformative action. How we think and talk about such hope, determines how we live out and embody such hope. Botman had, as will be indicated, a specific vision on how the present links with the future reign of God through discipleship.

Given their different theological styles and contexts one can ask whether it is possible to bring Moltmann and Botman into a constructive dialogue around the notion of hope. This study proposes that this is a fruitful endeavor and aims to demonstrate that Moltmann and Botman contribute in different yet overlapping ways towards an account of embodied hope informed by a Christological vision.

1.2 Motivation and background

My initial impetus for this study developed out of a previous research assignment on Botman’s account of hope. This previous study on Botman, required for my Master of Divinity degree, also completed under the supervision of Prof. Robert Vosloo, was more biographical in nature. The research focused primarily on Botman’s life, his influences, theological convictions and

ecumenical involvement – both nationally and globally. This study is more systematic and constructive in the sense that it explores certain themes and topics of Botman’s theology – primarily “transformative hope” and draws parallels with Moltmann’s “theology of hope”. This research thus draws together the theologies of Botman and Moltmann to explore the relationship between hope and embodiment – as a hope that inspires action and transformation.

In his article, “What hope is there for South Africa? A public theological reflection on the role of the church as a bearer of hope for the future” (2015), Dion Forster discusses the question of hope by adopting a public theological methodology. His article proposes that “the complexity of Christian hope necessitates an understanding of the present reality that is held in dynamic tension with the desired future – namely a present-futurist eschatology” (Forster, 2015:1). From the perspective and vantage point of the church, in its diverse understandings and forms, Forster seeks to portray the church as bearer of Christian hope that can contribute towards shaping a better future for South Africa by asking what forms hope takes in South Africa and specifically in our current social and historical context.

In his quest to find answers to these questions Forster’s claim is in line with the argument of this study as it reminds us that the importance of past memories should not be neglected as it is the importance of these memories that helps us in shaping our understanding of hope. Concisely, for this study and for Forster, it is important to understand that hope is not aloof from present realities. Forster further argues, “while we cannot predict the exact shape of our future, there are some theological constants that should carry us forward in hope. Together with this we can also look back from our current vantage points to see how we arrived where we currently are.” (Forster, 2015:2). What Forster is arguing for is not for the church to be the primary driver for change in society. What he is arguing for is for the church to adopt a way of living that is rooted in the message of the Gospel that can ultimately make the church the agent that bears visible hope to inspire society to follow the same example.

This enables Forster to draw from the American ethicist Stanley Hauerwas’ contribution to the theme of eschatological hope. Forster introduces Hauerwas at this point to emphasise the importance of not isolating the mission of the church from its theological essence but also to take into account the responsibility of the church in societal and political issues. Forster’s article, one can say, explains hope first of all as a timeful hope, a focus that is also central to this study. Understanding hope as “timeful” (and, one can add, timely) is specifically important as it shapes the way hope is understood in our discourses. If hope is related to the past, the

present and the future in a way that disconnects these time domains from each other, we miss the significance of its meaning. If we were to see hope merely as something determined by past memories, we inevitably deny the transformative potential of memory for the present and how our memory shapes the way in which we establish agencies that bear hope. If we only see hope as something for the present, we miss the importance of memory in the shaping of how our capacity for hope is shaped and sustained. And, if we see hope to be something only in the future, we miss the potential of hope as a medium to inspire hopeful and transformative action today.

Forster also makes it clear that Christian hope cannot be understood as something worldly; rather, it should be seen as primarily Christological, thus resulting from Christ' person and work. This argument is at the heart of this study. This understanding of hope also calls the church, faith communities and church leaders to their public responsibility to live in a way that resembles the life of Christ. Among other things this implies that we defend the poor and the marginalized, oppose and object to oppression, injustice and misgovernance, and to attend to those who suffer in times of despair.

In short, the study proposes that hope should not be isolated from theological themes but should be understood as Christologically shaped. Such an account of Christian hope has political and social implications.

1.3 Problem statement

This study seeks to address and correct reductive and theologically inadequate interpretations of hope. These reductive interpretations and understandings of hope lead to inaction in situations where the church ought to act against threats to humanity and the universe at large. These reductive interpretations of hope also delay positive social and political transformation. Therefore, this study wants to address the promise and pitfalls of the search for a Christologically shaped hope as a counter to reductive misunderstandings and misinterpretations of hope as these prevent us from responding faithfully and effectively to contemporary challenges.

1.4 Research questions

The background to this study is formed by broader questions such as: What is the relationship between hope and societal issues such as poverty and wealth, injustice, misgovernance, and inequality, and our (the church's) response thereto? And, more specifically, given the

conversation partners in this study, what are the contributions of Moltmann and Botman in this regard? What form could an account of Christian hope take that is informed by their work? The reason for their specific inclusion in this study will be discussed as part of the methodological aspects of the study.

From the questions above, this study engages with the central question, which can be stated as a mean research question: *What theological insights can be gained from Moltmann and Botman in the search for the contours of an understanding of Christian hope that links hope to transformative action?*

With this in mind, further questions flow:

- How does the notion of hope function in the thought of the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann and the South African theologian Russel Botman, especially with regard to the way in which they see the link (or disconnection) between hope and embodied action, or hope and transformation?
- What theological convictions in terms of Christology, eschatology and ethics might shape such an account of hope?

1.5 Hypothesis

It is the expectation that this research study will indicate that Moltmann and Botman's engagement with the notion of hope is productive for the development of an embodied, Christologically shaped account of hope. This study aims to indicate, that an account of hope that draws on their work, will challenge reductive understandings of hope (one can speak of "cheap hope") that hinder the emphasis on the link between hope and transformation and paved the way towards a richer theological account of hope.

Moltmann once explained to me – during a visit to Stellenbosch in 2017, at a meeting for postgraduate students at Stellenbosch University – that hope stirs one's imagination and that our imagination helps us to discern possibilities and to dream. Through these dreams and possibilities, agencies are established that seek to promote human life and human dignity. The main thrust of the study can be understood in the light of this emphasis. This study seeks to suggest a hope that is timeful and timeous (that is, linked to memory and imagination) as opposed to reductive understandings of hope. This timeful hope finds its essence primarily in the life and way of Jesus Christ. This study seeks to explore such timeful hope within the South African context,

1.6 Contributions and relevance

Whereas much has been written on Moltmann's theology and ethics of hope, there has not been a study that brings Moltmann and the South African pastor, theologian and educator Russel Botman into critical conversation with each other on the theme of hope. This study seeks to address this gap. This study of Botman and Moltmann can also provide a new perspective by bringing a theologian of the global South into conversation with a European theologian such as Moltmann (albeit that he is also read in the global South).

A recent attempt in engaging with Moltmann from a South African perspective has been made by Wessel Bentley, a researcher at the University of South Africa. He attempted to draw from Moltmann in order to propose a new perspective on citizenship in South Africa. In his article "Post-secular democracy and the Reign of God: Reading Habermas and Moltmann in South Africa" (2015), Bentley draws from Moltmann's *Ethics of Hope* to explain Moltmann's understanding of God's reign. And he draws from Habermas' model of post-secular democracy to "propose an integrated relationship between responsible citizenship and Christian social conscience" (Bentley, 2015:1). I will return to this article of Bentley's in the last chapter of this study to explain the hope-giving potential of Christian ethics and values in any context. This explanation of hope will also contribute to establish a link between hope and embodiment. The focus of this study is, however, different and broader than Bentley's article, also given the fact that it brings Moltmann into conversation with Botman.

1.7 Research methodology

This study is a literature literary study that seeks responsible engagement with important theologians on the theme of Christian hope. In the process the researcher aims to take social and historical location seriously. The researcher's own social location implies a "post-apartheid" situation, one in which transition and transformation are desired after a dark age of oppression and deprivation but are still greatly delayed. Theological, social and political dialogue and debates about wealth distribution, land reform, inequality, racism, reconciliation, unity and justice dominate the different discourses in the context of the researcher. It should be said, in addition to this, that the aim of this study seeks not to address these issues directly, but to propose a new way of talking about hope which may serve as guide for the church and religious leaders to engage with these discourses with new and theologically informed insights on how to contribute to the process of transition and transformation in South Africa.

This study will primarily engage with the work of Jürgen Moltmann on the topics of hope, eschatology, Christology and ethics (cf. his works *Theology of Hope*, *Ethics of Hope*, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, *The Coming of God*). The study will draw greatly from Moltmann's hope in relation to Christ's public life and ethics for the rehabilitation of the cosmos, in different forms, such as social, economic, political and ecological life.

This study also engages Russel Botman as pivotal conversation partner – a leading South African and ecumenical voice in the discourse on hope. These two scholars will be the main conversation partners. With regard to the chapter on Russel Botman, the Botman Collection in the Beyers Naudé Archive provided rich resources for the purposes of this study. The study will draw greatly from Botman's views on formation and transformation with the influence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's idea of "Form, Formation and Transformation". Botman's contribution will grow from his exploration of discipleship as something which is embedded in our Christian calling and our missional responds to the gospel. Both Moltmann and Botman's contributions develop from great Christological insights which develop into a greater ethical and moral responsibility by the church, academia and society. For that reason, will this study engage with these themes and topics to develop an understanding of hope that is in line with the character of Christ in the attempt to introduce a hope that is timeful and can be embodied in our everyday human life.

This study will also engage with other important scholars that have written on the themes of Christology, eschatology and hope within the African contexts, such as Allan Boesak and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. Drawing on their work, the literary study will engage with historical and contemporary views on hope and how we can interpret and apply hope in our world with its political, economic, social and religious challenges. Boesak and Gobodo-Madikizela, both African theologians, speak significantly on the role of the church in the lives of the suffering and the oppressed and on the injustices, they experience through power abuse and systemic wrongs. Both address the presence of God in these situations and suggest ways in which we ought to understand the role of the church not just as pastoral space or safe haven for these people but also to protest against these injustices to become bearers of hope for the hopeless.

Another two voices that will be prominent features in this study are Ingolf Dalferth, a German philosopher of religion and theologian who will specifically bring Christological insights to our discussion of hope, as well as the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (whose influence

is discernable in the work of both Moltmann and Botman) who will extend this Christological discussion with his significant contributions on formation and transformation through ethics as discipleship.

The main themes of discussion will therefore be discipleship, ethics, Christology, eschatology, soteriology and citizenship. These themes will all be discussed with regard to their relevance for the study that describes the contours of an “incarnate hope” (an embodied hope that engenders hopeful agency). Hope incarnate, or embodied hope, is introduced in this study as a hope that moves away from an idea that hope is something to be merely waited upon in a passive way, be it in the near or far future. Rather this study suggests that hope becomes alive and active in our everyday life by the way we live, the way we treat others, and, in the way, we embody opposition to the wrongs and evil that confronts us daily. Theologically speaking, this account of hope is Christologically shaped, with Jesus as the Lord and example to be followed in order for hope to become action, albeit with the necessary hermeneutical qualifications that this statement invites. Jesus is hope incarnate and when we follow his example in the way we live, we become bearers of hope. This idea of hope will be developed in the next chapters by drawing specifically from what can be described as Jürgen Moltmann’s “Theology and Ethics of Hope” and Russel Botman’s “Transformative Hope”.

1.8 Structure

With the above comments on the scope of the thesis, the background to the study, the research problem and questions, and the methodology, the structure of the rest of the thesis is as follows.

Chapter 2 will look at defining terms and ideas of hope. It will provide a brief analysis of how hope is often understood and how it is practiced. The notions of “incarnate hope” and “non-incarnate hope” will be introduced and discussed in a heuristic way, and preliminary ideas on what can be described as a threefold approach to hope are offered. This emphasises the relationship between hope and memory, hope and imagination, and hope and transformation. These orientating comments also help us to place our discourse on hope in relation to the past, present and future. Hope in relation to memory provides a framework in which the past is acknowledged as an essential part of shaping our understanding of how reductive or cheap hope has been understood. This relationship between hope and memory provides the opportunity for the present to be informed by what happened in our past. The relationship between hope and imagination seeks to explain that our memory informs our imagination and from this imagining process we are informed and inspired to change our memory for

empowering hopeful agency with the future in mind. The linking of the relationship between hope and transformation is the result of remembering the past truthfully and imaging a different future in order to engage reality as hopeful agents of change in the present.

In dealing with all these different questions, chapter 3 explores the contributions that Moltmann's Christology, ethics and eschatology can make to a better understanding of an incarnate hope. I will specifically focus on Moltmann's works *Theology of Hope*, *The Coming of God*, *An Ethics of Hope*, and *The Way of Jesus Christ*. The way in which a theology of hope and an ethics of hope is interlinked in his broader theological study will receive special attention. I spent some time in Tübingen as part of an exchange programme where I worked extensively on Moltmann's theology. This chapter seeks to indicate how Moltmann's account of hope is not to be separated from his thought on Christology, Eschatology, and Ethics.

Different but not totally dissimilar to the engagement with Moltmann, chapter 4 discusses how Botman provides a specific reflection on how the future reign of God is linked to discipleship and transformation. This chapter will commence with Botman's essay, "Hope as the Coming Reign of God", a chapter from a collective reader (edited by Walter Brueggemann) entitled *Hope for the World: Mission in a Global Context* (published in 2001). The other sections of this chapter will engage with different material, primarily by Botman and some secondary sources, for instance some articles by Dirkie Smit. The influence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, on whose Christological thought Botman wrote his dissertation, as well as Latin American theologians such as Rubem Alves, will also be brought into the conversation in order to come to a deeper understanding of the sources for Botman's theology and pedagogy of hope.

The final chapter (chapter 5) will draw on the work of Moltmann and Botman to provide possible contours for an account of "incarnate hope" that link theology and ethics, hope and action, hope and transformation. The threefold approach to hope referred to in chapter 2 (hope and memory, hope and imagination, hope and transformation) will also be brought into discussion in the broader context of the discourse on hope in the South African context.

This study was inspired by Russel Botman's dream of a society in which young people would only know of apartheid through hearsay. And his dream for the church to become engaged ambassadors and activists of hope in society. And the vision of a university that understands excellence as a good to be achieved through a commitment to societal transformation that reach those on the margins so that they may share in a life marked by equality, justice, freedom, dignity and flourishing.

Chapter 2: From reductive understandings of hope to a Christologically shaped hope

2.1 Reductive understandings of hope

Allan Boesak puts forward some profound arguments on the topic of hope in his book *Dare We Speak of Hope?* (2014), written as an attempt to enrich and qualify the character of our discourse on hope after apartheid. Boesak came to the conclusion that throughout the history of South Africa a language of hope has often been promoted to silence the despairing and oppressed voices of people bound to the shackles of injustice and oppression. This language of hope was welcomed in all spheres of life, including the church, academia and society. Hope was portrayed as something to be expected in the far future, something that will bring a better reality than the one currently on our doorstep. This use of hope has welcomed many reductive contours of hope. Boesak explains that reductive hope is “use and abuse as a concept of religion and politics and it’s been offered as no more than the opiate of the poor and oppressed, not to uplift and inspire but to silent and suppress” (Boesak, 2014:26).

In addition to Boesak’s argument of these reductive understandings of hope, Flora Keshgegian’s remark in her book *Time for Hope* (2006) should be considered. She observes that in the early centuries of the biblical tradition there occurred a shift in the way Christians approached time. The sense of narrative tension, of the imminent expectation of Christ’s return, which so permeated the early books of the New Testament, decreased. As a result, the time of God’s reign was stretched out more and more toward an unseen future. Rather than imagining the kingdom of God to be at hand, Christian theologians, increasingly influenced by Greek philosophical thought forms, found themselves imagining the fullness of God’s presence as not here and not now. “Hope for redemption came to be seen as a future promise, realized in a place called heaven, redemption was in an afterlife, rather in this life” (Keshgegian, 2006:26). As any sense of imminent expectation dissipated and the future moved more and more forward towards an unknown time of ending, human time and God’s time, earth and heaven, split further apart.

This way of thinking about hope is precisely what this study is addressing. The fact that some contemporary discourses is tempted to place hope in the far future, something that is of no use in the present, is the reason why action and transformation is delayed and often not even

considered as an essential part of hope. Another misunderstanding that this chapter is engaging with is the idea that hope is seen as mere optimism or as something merely therapeutic. This chapter will underline the need to move from these restrictive understandings of hope to a Christologically grounded and shaped hope.

2.2 Cheap hope

This chapter will specifically look at these reductive views of hope which influence the way we respond to hope-talk. These problematic and deficient views of hope will lead us to establish what a non-incarnate hope or in this case a “cheap hope” means. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his well-known book *Discipleship*, writes about cheap grace which he defines “as the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, without baptism, and without church discipline. For Bonhoeffer cheap grace is the mortal enemy of the church. It is the denial of God’s living word, denial of the incarnation of the Word of God” (Bonhoeffer, 2003:44-45).

This chapter introduces possible accounts of cheap hope that have even tempted the church to adopt these views for reasons that is not Christologically grounded. Three main expressions of cheap hope will be discussed in this part of the chapter namely, (1) hope as mere therapy (when hope is merely seen as something that makes you feel better or bring temporary relief to a despairing situation), (2) hope as mere optimism (something that brings mere positive energy for the time being) and (3) hope as other-worldly (something that negates the power of hope for this life). This chapter will briefly discuss each of these understandings and point instead to a Christologically shaped hope that holds the potential to move beyond these cheap accounts of hope.

2.2.1 Hope as mere therapy

In an article entitled “Selling Hope: advertising and patient expectation”, published in July 2014, in the *Cancer and Society* journal, Talha Khan Burki explains that patients with various cancers often expect unrealistic outcomes because the patients are psychologically fed false hopes about cures for cancer. Research found that marketing is one of the strongest strategies used to evoke narratives of hope. Advertising sells hope very easily and quickly. Hope is being used as an emotional and psychological device to gain power over people and to make them believe that what they are expecting or believe is within reaching distance, even though the reality of it seems absolutely impossible (Burki, 2014:798). This commercialisation of hope is seen as a form of therapy, sold to people, promising results of emotional, mental and

psychological relief from day to day struggles. Hope is seen as a belief or form of believing that helps makes people escape the realities of life and provides false, optimistic solutions to problems. This therapeutic view of hope evolves into optimism which is also often seen as some form of hope.

2.2.2 Hope as mere optimism

In an argument made by Maria Ojala, in her article, “Hope and Anticipation in education for a sustainable future”, she explains that hope in most instances “leads to unrealistic optimism as it is only a positive emotion and an existential must, which needs to be cultivated” (Ojala, 2017:82). For her this is important because when people are positive, they are more engaging and open to learn. For her hope is limited to an emotional and cognitive concept.

These arguments of Ojala are shared by Tony T. Wells, who argues that “hope/optimism is emotional mechanism used to reduce psychological distress” (Wells, 2018:84). For Wells hope is the capacity to create cognitive pathways for one to achieve certain goals and to design the road to achieving these goals. Thus, hope for Wells is a cognitive event associated with the improvement of life satisfaction.

In addition to Wells’ argument on hope and optimism, Terry Eagleton’s book *Hope without Optimism* (2015) discusses in depth the dangers of understanding hope as optimism. Eagleton begins the first chapter of his book by making it clear that there may be various good reasons for people to believe that things will work out well, but to expect that it will work out because we are optimistic about it is not one of them. For Eagleton (2015:1), if there is no good reason why things should work out satisfactorily, there is no good reason why they should not turn out badly either. He concludes that optimism is baseless. It is, however, possible to be a pragmatic optimist, in the sense of feeling assured that this specific problem, but not the other, will be resolved. There are also what one might call professional or card-carrying optimists who feel positive about a specific situation because they tend to be positive in general. These professional optimists carry the belief that life as a whole is not so bad. These people are in danger of buying their hope on the cheap. For Eagleton “optimism is more a matter of belief than of hope. Optimism is based on the mere opinion that things will work out well, not on the determined commitment that hope involves” (Eagleton, 2015:1).

Therefore, an optimist is not just someone with high hopes. Even a pessimist can feel positive on a particular issue, whatever his or her characteristics. One can have hope without feeling

that things in general are likely to turn out well. An optimist is rather someone who is strong or positive about life simply because he is an optimist. For Eagleton “optimism does not take despair seriously enough” (Eagleton, 2015:12). He explains that what one might think of hope or however one chooses to define hope, he is certain that it is not a question of optimism.

2.2.3 Hope as other-worldly

The conversation of other-worldly hope is explained by Gichaara (2014) in the article “Shifting Paradigms of Time, History and Eschatological Hope in Africa: The Case of the Church in Kenya” against the backdrop of the history of Christianity in Kenya. According to Gichaara (2014:2) the history of the planting of Christianity in Kenya and its subsequent expansion is similar to that of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. The nineteenth-century Christianity that finally took root in Africa was introduced in Kenya by two German missionary explorers: Johann Ludwig Krapf, who arrived on the coast of Kenya in 1844 and Johann Rebmann, who joined the former in 1846. They had been sent by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of London.

The two established a mission station at Ribe with the intention of spreading the Christian gospel from the coast of Kenya into the interior. In addition to how the gospel was spread and what was preached Gichaara (2014:2) explains that according to John Mbiti, the Africans in Kenya and elsewhere responded to the gospel of Christ because in it they had discovered an eschatological future, which they expected would suddenly bring them to a land of bliss, comfort and long life. Mbiti, therefore, says that the Africans who became Christians had a “false spirituality” and were soon disillusioned when their expected Parousia did not take place. This false spirituality was built on the illusion that what the Bible is promising has no effect on humanities current situation. These people were sold a spirituality that would bind them to their current situation and promised them a life that is yet to come, making God basically absent in our present reality.

2.2.4 Summary

In sum, these interpretations and understandings of hope are briefly mentioned (and many examples of the way they find expression can be added) because of their relevance to the question of what non-incarnate or cheap hope is. Theologically viewed, the basic problem with what can be called non-incarnate or cheap hope is that it lacks a sufficient Christological grounding and relies only on the ideas such as therapeutic feelings of relief or escapism, optimism or positive thinking, or the paralyzing imagining of a better future. These

interpretations of hope are the reasons why hope is seen as ineffective and that it has lost its relevance and power in life. Placing your hope in categories of positive thinking or wishful fantasy or using it as a media device to manipulate and overpower people's emotions, portrays hope as something that does not provide lasting comfort and transformation. These interpretations of hope have become, if we can recall Allan Boesak, a device which is used by the media, politics, even the church, to silence the cries of people. The church does no longer know how to engage with these cries of people as they have become so accustomed to the idea of hope sold cheaply by the media and politics.

Hope then falls into the categories of the above-mentioned: (1) as an emotional and psychological power used by the media to convince people to buy whatever they are selling; (2) as a cognitive and emotional device that reduces physiological distress and makes people more open to what we are teaching them and want them to believe (3) as a device used to justify political failure and to accept these failures and (4) as nothing more than a dream or imaginative medium that pictures utopian visions. This study only mentioned three deficient views of hope, but they can be multiplied. But the mentioned examples point to the harmful aspects of these accounts of hope for human life.

The above stands in total conflict with a hope incarnate as it has no desire to empower or uplift, or even challenge the realities of life; instead it forces people to believe that something better will come and that the injustices and poor governance and violence are their fault because the hopes that people have are unrealistic (taking into account that the only thing people desire and hope for is a life that serves them good, and the media, politics and economics teach them that this hope and desire are unrealistic). These deficient views of hope have no intention of bettering the world or transforming the world to a state where the common good of people are priority. No, this hope is designed by people in power to silence the crying voices from below to accept their realities and to never question those in power. This study seeks to explain hope in a way that challenges these deficient views and suggests an alternative hope that is Christologically grounded, informed and inspired and which serves the common good of all people. This Christologically grounded hope distinguishes itself from mere expectation, anticipation and optimism.

In the above discussion, we explored the nature of reductive understandings of hope by looking at what this study termed as cheap hope. Cheap hope suggests a number of themes that bring to light these reductive understandings: hope as therapy, hope as optimism, and hope as other-

worldly. With these themes in mind the following chapters will explore the work of Jürgen Moltmann and Russel Botman to propose a hope that is Christologically grounded and points towards a more timeful understanding of hope.

2.3 Towards a timeful understanding of hope?

Against the background of these reductive understandings of hope, this study seeks to develop an account of hope that does not just connect hope with the future, or more pointedly, does not separate our hope for the future from our present realities and our past memories. We hope for a better, different or new future, but this hope has everything to do with the present. It stamps our actions in the present. Remembrance of the trauma of the past influences our capacity for hope. But the past can also serve as a source for hope.

In his article *Cura animarum as hope care: Towards a theology of the resurrection within the human quest for meaning and hope* (2014), Daniel Louw addresses these reductive understandings of hope being understood as “antidote of dread, and despair or a kind of escapism from harsh realities of anguish and suffering” (Louw, 2014:1). Louw begins his conversation by asking a number of questions. First, he asks; what is unique in the Christian tradition regarding the characteristics of hope? Is it merely an emotional category on the level of the affective, a mood swing dealing with need-satisfaction and wishful thinking? Is hope merely the prognostic projection of a better future or the restoration of loss in terms of past categories? Is the Christian variation of hope, a “category that differentiates between prophetic projections and temporal forecasts, future as utopia [the not-yet of something that does not exist, created by imagination and the creativity of the human mind], and future as Parousia [the Second Coming, an eschatological understanding of a messianic expectation – the not-yet” (Louw, 2014:1). Louw also asked a popular question, which this chapter seeks to address, namely whether hope is not an escape from the present and a futile exercise, merely to bypass the existential realities of the now?

Louw defines hope in terms of the resurrection, a new beginning, a new creation that finds its genesis within in the resurrection. The resurrection defines hope as a “new state of mind. The identity of human beings is therefore not determined by descent, gender, race or social status, but by eschatology (a new creation)” (Louw, 2014:2). Louw explains that hope provides the transformation of the mind to become primarily about new courage. It opens different and new frameworks of meaningful living within the realm of suffering. For Louw hope in caregiving is not meant a kind of positive mood as the antipode for human anxiety or a sort of human

reaction to dread. In Christian spirituality, hope is essentially connected to compassion, compassion as the representation of God's act of love towards creation. Compassion that leads to the establishment of human dignity. Compassion that acknowledges the human in others and compassion that transforms the ways in which we live out our Christian vocation.

What this study appreciates about Louw's contribution to the discourse of hope, is Louw's awareness of hope as Christological in its very nature. He explains that hope focuses particularly on the Christ's person and work. This means that to be Christian is to live a life that aligns itself with the ways of Christ. The Christian understanding, according to Louw (2014:6) "is that hope does not pretend to solve all problems in life: it does not pretend to give solutions, cheap answers or promises of prosperity and instant happiness." However, it provides a meaningful framework in order to proceed with life in terms of an enduring faith and courage to transform humanity more and more into what God created us to be, loving, caring, compassionate and spiritual people who resist all kinds of forms of stigmatisation, discrimination and humiliation. "This hope instils a radical new identity beyond the prejudice of culturally formed identities. Even in the gender discourse and HIV and AIDS debate, it can contribute to the rewriting of 'masculinity and health' beyond the biased categories of chauvinism, misogyny and homophobia" (Louw, 2014:8). Louw is leading us into what this study calls a timeful hope.

To summarise, chapter two outlined and explained the reductive interpretations and understandings of hope. These cheap views of hope contribute to the lack of transformative action and agencies. These reductive understanding of hope is what brings cheap hope to our doorsteps as church, academia and society. Chapter two introduced these reductive views as one, hope as therapy (something that brings temporal relief to despairing situation), two, hope as optimism (something that is seen as mere positive energy) and three, hope as other-worldly (something that is to be expected and realized in another time and place, not in our time). These views of understanding hope is what this study wants to counter and replace with a Christologically grounded hope that is timeful in its nature and which inspires transformative action.

The following two chapters, on Moltmann and Botman respectively, asks what a theological account of hope implies that concurs with such a timeful understanding of hope. In the final chapter we aim to offer a more in-depth proposal regarding a Christologically grounded timeful account of hope which we will draw from Moltmann and Botman

Chapter 3: Jürgen Moltmann's Theological and Ethical Meditation on Hope

3.1 Introduction

Over a period of fifty years, Jürgen Moltmann pursued what he called “an adventure in theological discovery” (Bauckham, 2014:1). His journey started when he was held captive in a prisoner of war camp in the aftermath of the Second World War. It was in the midst of these horrors that Moltmann experienced the “gift of God as unexpected hope and the companionship of Christ who suffers with us” (Bauckham, 2014:1). Throughout his work he frequently recalls his deep experience of suffering and how it brought him to understand Christ as his companion, and as someone who suffers with us and does not stand aloof in our suffering and despair. The introductory remarks of this chapter draw a number of insightful facts concerning Moltmann's life story from his autobiography. This biographical information will pave the way for the rest of the chapter as it will give us insight into the circumstances and context in which Moltmann grew up and which influenced his theology.

In his autobiography with the title *A Broad Place: An Autobiography* (2008) – a title drawn from Psalm 31:8: “Thou hast set my feet on a broad place” – Moltmann narrates his life story in great detail with reference to his family life as a child, his youth, his life in war camps and prison, as well as his life as theological student, minister and theologian. He also pays tribute to scholars who have influenced him to become a scholar and theologian and who guided him to develop his theological thoughts and convictions to its maturity. This section of the study will draw much from *A Broad Place* to give us an idea of who Moltmann is and how he introduces himself to the rest of the world. This biographical information will help us understand the origin of Moltmann's theology and concerns and also the context and conditions in which his beliefs, thoughts and convictions were born and developed. Specific events will be emphasised more than others as to its relevance and importance to this study, for instance his life as prisoner of war (1945-47), his life as student at university and in the church seminary, and his views on public theology.

Jürgen Moltmann was born on the 8th of April 1926 and grew up as the second of four children. He explains that “there was always a degree of rivalry in the struggle for their parent’s recognition and affection” (Moltmann, 2008:10). However, things changed in his family house in 1939 when war broke out and his father was called up. From that time on he and his older brother had to become the protectors of their mother and younger brother and sister.

Moltmann explains that his childhood was not entirely a happy time. He calls it a time in which he often found himself in situations of “I don’t know what to do” (Moltmann, 2008:10). Moltmann always compared himself to his tall father against whom he was very small. He was sent to school too early and was also the youngest and least mature in the classroom. However, for Moltmann his rich imagination made up for these short fallings. He explains that when he walked in the woods with his mother, he imagined dwarfs and elves everywhere and made up the wildest stories, which his mother liked to listen to as she enjoyed imagining similar things (Moltmann, 2008:10). He was never sociable; while the other boys were playing outside, he was often alone, and gladly so, dreaming of far-away things as he sat in front of the window. He could dwell for hours in the dream world of impossible possibilities, forgetting everything around him (Moltmann, 2008:12). According to Moltmann “no teacher in the local school could awaken his enthusiasm nor could his teachers find in him a pupil who could awaken theirs” (Moltmann, 2008:10). His grades were accordingly poor and that enraged his father. Yet two of Moltmann’s father’s maxims made a deep impression on him: “illness is a matter of the will” and “first think and then speak” (Moltmann, 2008:5).

Moltmann’s childhood and youth was also shaped and influenced by the “Operation of Gomorrah” of 24 July 1943, which was synonymous with destruction and terror, meaning people was murdered, killed, houses were destroyed, violence was the order of the day. Within this period of terror another emerged, Moltmann’s time as prisoner of war from 1945-47. This is a very formative period in Moltmann’s biography, and important as background for his engagement with the notion of hope. With a tone of deep emotion, Moltmann writes in his autobiography about how these stories of death and destruction “put their stamp on his life” (Moltmann, 2008:19). It was in these times of war where he had several near-death experiences; however, he was given a tin of beans by an English lieutenant, a tin of beans that was the first taste of food he had in days (Moltmann, 2008:25). Moltmann escaped death during this time but writes: “It was good to be still alive, but difficult, in the presence of the dead, to go on living, to live differently, to begin afresh” (Moltmann, 2008:26).

It was also during this time that Moltmann read the Bible every evening without much understanding of it, until he read Psalm 39:9-12 “I am dumb and must eat up my suffering within myself. My life is nothing before thee. Hear my prayer, Oh Lord, and give ear to my cry. Hold not thou thy peace at my ears, for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were”. In these few lines from scripture, Moltmann heard an echo from his own soul. Although Moltmann did not experience a sudden illumination, he returned to these words every evening as it gave him a sense that God understands him and can relate to what he was experiencing. The Psalm said the words he was crying deep in his soul.

Moltmann then continued to read the whole of Mark’s Gospel in which he came across the passion narrative. It was in the death cry of Jesus, “My God why have you forsaken me” (Mark 15:34), that Moltmann felt growing within him the conviction about “... someone who understands him completely, who is with him in his cries to God and has felt the same forsakenness he was living in at that time”. Moltmann began to understand the “assaulted and forsaken Christ because he knew that Christ understood him. The divine brother in need, the companion on the way, who goes with you through the valley of shadow of death, the fellow-sufferer who carries you, with your suffering” (Moltmann, 2008:30).

These convictions stayed with him until it all became clearer in his theological studies in Göttingen where he had his first theological experience with Hans-Joachim Iwand. Moltmann explains how Iwand presented to them the young Luther as if it was Luther himself talking. Moltmann sat in all Iwand’s lectures, seminars, and sermons and soon became a strong follower of him. Luther’s theology of the cross, as it was embodied in Iwand’s thought, touched Moltmann profoundly, war-wounded as he was, in body and soul.

Another influence on Moltmann was Otto Weber, an expert teacher and compelling preacher in Göttingen’s Reformed Church. Moltmann learned from Weber about the unity in difference between the pulpit and the rostrum. He also taught on Calvin’s *Institutio* and opened the wealth of Dutch theology for Moltmann and his peers. It was through Weber that Moltmann was introduced to Abraham Kuyper, Arnold Van Ruler, and Hendrikus Berkhof. It was Weber who threw open to Moltmann the world of Western European Reformed theology in Holland, France and Scotland, together with its Swiss origins in Zurich and Geneva. It was he who awakened in Moltmann the early interest in the post-Reformed period) and thus also pre-Enlightenment epoch) in theology and for more than ten years Moltmann’s studies were devoted to seventeenth century theology and intellectual thought.

Between 1958 and 1964 Moltmann started to develop his own theological trajectory. In the summer of 1959, he gave his lecture, “A Comparison between the Theologies of the Reformers (Luther-Zwingly-Calvin)”. Here Moltmann developed and gave expression to his historical interests and at the same time built a bridge to contemporary systematic theology (Moltmann, 2008:75). From 1959 onwards, Moltmann held theological seminars on Bonhoeffer’s theology and ethics, and taught philosophy classes on Feuerbach, Marx and Bloch. It was in a seminar held by Ernst Bloch, in their journey of discovery through his work, where Moltmann and his peers “became disciples/apostles of hope” (Moltmann, 2008:76).

For Moltmann, meeting Bloch was the most important event during his time in Wuppertal. Moltmann (2008:79) explains that he had no desire to follow Bloch or to fall heir to him. What Moltmann was looking to do was to find a theological parallel to Bloch’s atheistic principle of hope on the basis of the promissory history of the old covenant and the resurrection history of the new.

From this biographical information we learn much about Moltmann’s theological thoughts and how they came to be. In another book, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology* (2000), Moltmann gives a more in-depth outline of his theological methodology. And a study that seeks to explore the deepest theological convictions and thoughts of a significant theologian such as Jürgen Moltmann requires some form of investigation into the theological methodology and language of this theologian. Such an investigation will shape the understanding of the rest of what is to be discussed. In *Experiences in Theology* he gives a helpful structured outline and analysis of his theological methodology and theological interests. From this book it is evident that Moltmann seeks for a theological language that places Christ in the center of what theology seeks to accomplish in its entirety. Moltmann’s theology, in addition, explores questions such as: What does theology mean? What does it mean to be a theologian and think theologically?

In answering these questions Moltmann draws from the Old Testament theology of covenant and oath, promise and prophecy. This is the basis of his historical hermeneutics which focuses on political theology and the notion of the future. He also explains Christian theology in terms of *credo ut intelligam* (I believe so that I may understand), *doca spes* (hope becomes wise) and *intellectus amoris* (the reasonableness of love). Moving to the New Testament Moltmann, furthermore, outlines his Trinitarian hermeneutics in which he emphasises the equal importance of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These important themes form Moltmann’s

hermeneutics of hope which is informed by his reading of liberation theology and black theology, and in which he explores the two sides of oppression (oppressed and oppressor).

Moltmann's attempt to explain liberation theology draws strongly from his co-academic and friend Gustavo Gutierrez who sums up liberation theology "as a theology that is strongly embedded in the theology of the "Kingdom God" which, according to Gutierrez, is at the very heart of Jesus' message. The kingdom is both God's gift and his charge for the conduct of the person who says yes to him. Already reaching into history, the kingdom does not yet arrive at its full development in history. It is true that there are realizations of God's kingdom in the here and now, but these are neither the coming of the kingdom nor the whole of salvation; they are anticipatory fragments together with all their ambiguities of a full abundance which will only come about beyond history" (Moltmann, 2000:247).

In Moltmann's attempt to define theology, he explains theology in terms of an academic theology, congregational theology, and church theology. These theologies in essence has the same origin and nature which is in Jesus Christ, which is preached and taught in the different spheres of the church, academia and the public. This study wants to pay specific attention to Moltmann's definition of academic theology, not because it is more important than the other definitions of theology, but because it is parallel to how Moltmann thought of theology as a whole. Academic theology for Moltmann should link the church and theology to people of other academic disciplines, whether they are Christians or not. He motivates this by explaining that "because academic theology is in itself a combination of different disciplines, historical, philosophical and psychological, various common interests emerge, cutting across the boundaries of the different faculties; and this can be highly fruitful for theology" (Moltmann, 2000:9). It also important for Moltmann that theology is not just the concern of the churches, colleges and seminaries, but is "a shared theology of all believers" (Moltmann, 2000:9).

What, can one further ask in light of the focus of this study, does Moltmann's hermeneutics of hope imply? Moltmann explains that after he met Arnold van Ruler through Otto Weber, he learned of Van Ruler's critique that Barth's theology of reconciliation had neglected eschatology, just as Hegel, the philosopher of reconciliation, had also done in his time. Before Moltmann's encounter with Van Ruler, Moltmann was under the impression "that after Karl Barth there could no more be a new theology as there could be another philosopher after Hegel, because he said everything and said it well" (Moltmann, 2000:90). Moltmann was fascinated by Van Ruler's theology of the apostolate (with the focus on Christ and the church's existence

as being for the world). Moltmann was fascinated by what Van Ruler wrote about the Christian church, as well as about what he presented as the Old Testament's surplus of promise towards the New.

From Bloch's philosophy of hope Moltmann learned basic categories for his theology of hope, but without engaging in atheism. Moltmann took, as the basis of his theology, biblical hope, the Jewish faith in the promise and the Christian resurrection of hope. He did this to initiate a deliberately parallel theological act; following the medieval theology of *caritas* and the Reformation theology of faith, Moltmann's aim was to help the hope of the modern times to come into its own. He explains that he had "no wish simply to write a theology about hope, rather his purpose was to develop a theology out of hope - theology as eschatology, theology of the liberating kingdom of God in the world" (Moltmann, 2000:93).

Moltmann's ground-breaking *Theology of Hope*, which will be discussed later on, distinguishes between promise and prophecy, which becomes a significant distinction in his theology of hope. For Moltmann a prophecy is not a promise. He explains that the prophesy has no influence on the future event. It influences only the subjective attitudes of the people who believe in it. It is in this sense that there is self-fulfilling and self-destroying prophecy. In his home language (German), Moltmann explains that "one does not talk about prophesies being fulfilled, one says that it comes to pass or has not come to pass" (Moltmann, 2000:93).

On the one hand a promise is a speech-act, which is authenticated by the person who promises. It is performative, not interpretive. The person who promises something keeps his word and performs what he has promised. If he fails to keep a promise, he breaks his word. We can only perform what we ourselves can perform. A promise which has one's own person as object is also called a vow, because it calls forth unconditional trust and faith. It is often linked with an oath. "Whatever the endorsements may look like, they are always covenant formulas, orientations which look for, and are dependent on good faith whether in the marriage bond or in the ties of social and political life" (Moltmann, 2000:95). Moltmann further on explains that from the standpoint of fulfilment, every promise is therefore literally a *pro-missio*, a sending-ahead of what is to come. In this respect God's promise is the Gospel in the heralding of his coming. Thus, the historical present and the eschatological future can only be bridged in the language of promise, not in the language of concepts, as concept presupposes a finished, completed reality.

Another important dimension set out by Moltmann in terms of methodology is the understanding of political theology introduced by Johann Baptist Metz into the theological and public debate. In line with Metz, Moltmann too wished to break the understanding of religion as a private affair and also he wanted to formulate critically and prophetically the message of Christianity, newly understood as eschatological, in the conditions of modern society; “Every eschatological theology has to become a political theology, as a theology critical of society” (Moltmann, 2000:114).

Moltmann’s theology, moreover, is in its totality Trinitarian and Pneumatological (Moltmann, 2000:145, 309). For Moltmann what the Spirit of truth communicates is knowledge of Christ the Lord and the God who has raised him. But the fact that the Spirit communicates this is something new and specific to the Spirit, over against what Christ and God the Father have done and do. The faith which the Spirit awakens is in content wholly related to Christ and God, but in the coming of faith the new day of God already begins. From time immemorial, the Holy Spirit had been understood as the eternal light which enlightens and illuminates. “The Trinitarian circle has no limits in its work and formulation and the person who knows Christ and believes the God who raised him from the death is illuminated by God the Spirit and enters into the eternal light” (Moltmann, 2000; 145).

In addition to this, Moltmann (2000:148) explains that the Spirit of Christ is the power and energy of the resurrection. It is already experienced here and now in the love which is as strong as death, and it makes believers experience in love the eternal life. In its life becomes indestructible, unfading and immortal. The Spirit of God is also active in the sacraments. Moltmann calls this “faith-creating, assurance creating talk of God sacramental, because here God’s Word can be heard in the human word, and authority for it is found in the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit” (Moltmann, 2000:178). Sacramental talk about God is absolute inasmuch as it contains at the heart the word of absolution, the free pardon for new, free life in the life-giving Spirit. When the divine speech which forgives sins takes form, what happened is what John describes as; receive the Holy Spirit. “The outpouring of the Holy Spirit extends to all flesh” (Moltmann, 2000:179).

Moltmann’s experiences of isolation and suffering (as briefly described in the discussion of his biography above) had shaped the way his theology developed over the years. It was in these experiences that Moltmann encountered God. These experiences of Moltmann bear the roots of his theology and his faith. Throughout Moltmann’s work, God’s presence and solidarity with

the suffering and the isolated are deeply emphasized, something he personally experienced and which shaped him.

Moltmann's theology has influenced many thinkers in the academy, society and the church. His influence has resulted in the fact that many scholars from various disciplines acknowledge Moltmann as one of the most significant and influential thinkers of the twentieth century. Moltmann's ground-breaking contributions, whether in books, lectures or interviews, address society in its various forms and suggest alternative ways of living based on the life and ways of Jesus Christ with the promotion of life and human flourishing as goal.

In the 1960s Moltmann's first ground-breaking book, *Theology of Hope*, marked a major shift in how church leaders and the church thought and still think about God and hope. This book drew much attention specifically because it complemented the mood of that decade. According to Bauckham (2014:1), in Western Europe and North America it was a time when unlimited possibilities for radical change for the better seemed within reach. Within this book, as well as others, Moltmann sought to restore the full dimensions of Christian hope. He shows how the Biblical history of promise explores a new future for this world and its history.

The center of Moltmann's theology was, and has always remained, the Biblical history of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. This not only inspires Christians to join with others in pursuing present possibilities of change that correspond to the coming Kingdom, but also gives Christian hope the potential to critique humanity if this message is not practiced in human life. The life of Christ reminds us that the resurrected and crucified Christ is the one who, in his abandoned death, identified with the most wretched and the most hopeless. This is the message that is promoted and developed throughout Moltmann's entire career.

He published *The Crucified God* in 1972 to emphasise the suffering love of God on the cross. This book signifies God's compassion in his passion, death and cross with those who suffer. Moltmann suggested a different model of life to the church and society, which is the image of open fellowship, which does not form a closed circle of familiarity amongst those who are like each other but is open in love for the outsiders and the unlike. This argument is strongly emphasized in Moltmann's *Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1993) in which Moltmann lay out, what is traditionally known as the marks of the true church, the church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. This implies that the church ought to live as people who is one with all creation, beyond boundaries of race, gender, class etc. The church is obedient to its

koinonical and diaconical vocations to all and that the church should proclaim the gospel to its fullest and live in accordance thereof.

Moltmann values creation and human life to the extent that he emphasises that human life and the entirety of creation cannot and should not attempt to maintain itself without the Spirit of God. For Moltmann, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of life, and the Spirit will remain a life-giving matrix inspiring humanity to conform to this life-giving way of living which can only be ignited by the knowledge of the Holy Spirit (Moltmann, 1977:185). The Spirit is the primary source of life, and the Spirit's potential for continuous renewal of all life has no limits. The Spirit revealed in Christ is life-renewing and possesses the potential to change the direction of humanity from death to life. Jesus Christ's work on earth – his message, mission and passion – was inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is one significant characteristic of Moltmann's work that he drew from Paul.

Paul's Christology was Pneumatological, and from this derives Moltmann's emphasis on a Trinitarian understanding of God. Moltmann makes specific reference to this in his book, *The Spirit of Life*, published in 1991, in which he often refers to Paul's affirmation of the life-giving and life-sustaining power of the Spirit. The *Spirit of Life* also reaffirms Moltmann's starting point in his account of hope, and his *Ethics of Hope* brings to fruition the ethical promise of his *Theology of Hope*. Thus, for Moltmann, it is important that Christian hope means "resisting and anticipating resisting the normative force of what dominated the present and anticipating the new and liberating future that comes with God" (Bauckham, 2014:5).

Christian hope teaches us that our experiences inform our perception and understanding of hope and how it functions in human life. Second, the hope that we come to realise in human life should derive and be drawn directly from Jesus Christ. Third, it guides our understanding that a life which conforms to Jesus' life in its entirety; his passion, cross and resurrection is a life that invites communal life in love, renewal of human relations through reconciliation and the affirmation of life through the promotion of human dignity and sacrificial love. Thus, the theme of God's promise and the fulfilment of this promise, the history of hope and its future, Christ's selfless acts of love, and our response in consistent obedience to Christ mark the framework for Moltmann's theology in this chapter.

This chapter will look at these themes and explore the ways in which they help us to understand hope that is incarnated. I will primarily engage with Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* with special attention to his "meditation on hope", in which he unfolds the topic of hope by meditating on

its eschatological, Christological and ethical implications. Moltmann's meditation on hope will lead the discussion in this chapter. I will specifically look at the groundings of this meditation to see how it can help us to interpret Philippians 2:1-5. This chapter will conclude with the basic question of how the Philippians text and the different groundings on the meditation can help us to develop a framework in which we can explore the impact of a hope incarnate on agency and transformation, as the question of the role of hope in transformative agency is the primary concern of this study.

In sum, this chapter will explore Moltmann's contributions and understanding of Christian hope and how his understanding of hope can assist us in further interpretations of hope today. This chapter seeks to establish whether Moltmann's theology of hope can serve as a guideline for our interpretation of a "hope incarnate". The basis of this chapter will be formed by Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* and how it explicates in his eschatology, Christology and ethics.

The main question will be to see if Moltmann can help us to unfold hope in its current form to a form that is active in transformative agencies in our daily lives. This chapter wants to establish whether Moltmann's resources of Christian hope are sufficient to help us make hope more concrete and to move away from modern deficient ways of portraying hope in society and in church. The chapter further explores how Moltmann uses the way of Jesus Christ, Jesus' ethics, his passion, cross and resurrection to steer us away from these general ideas of hope in society and even in the church. In the previous chapter reference was made to some unhelpful discourses on hope in society marked by its abstract nature or elements of wishful thinking. A Christologically grounded account of hope serves as a challenge to these deficient accounts of hope. This chapter will then conclude with suggestions on how Moltmann's theology can assist us in drawing a clear path of using the notion of an incarnate hope in a way not separated from transformative action in church and society.

It should be mentioned that Moltmann has never done theology in the form of defense of ancient doctrines or ecclesiastical dogmas. It has always been a journey of exploration. Consequently, his way of thinking is experimental and imaginative. For Moltmann, theology is neither church dogmatism nor a doctrine of faith. "It is imagination for the kingdom of God in the world, and for the world in God's kingdom" (Moltmann, 1996:x-xvii). This means that it is always and everywhere public theology and never a religious ideology of civil and political society, not even so-called Christian society.

For that reason, this chapter should be read against the background that Moltmann does not suggest that his work, conclusions and interpretations are final and absolute but they are only suggestions to provide a clearer and better understanding of the Christian faith and the purpose of the church and human life in this world. Thus, his theology can be reconsidered, appropriated and re-examined to clarify the understanding of themes within theology today.

In what follows I will first explore Moltmann's development of hope as an eschatological theme. For Moltmann, the promise of an eschatological hope is pivotal for Christian faith and it influences the way he develops the rest of his theology.

3.2: Eschatological groundings

3.2.1 What is the logos of Christian eschatology?

In his autobiography, *A Broad Place*, Moltmann calls his research “systematic contributions to theology.” (Moltmann, 2009:9) Throughout these contributions Moltmann spends significant time exploring and investigating the theological themes of Christology, eschatology and ethics. In this part of the chapter we will specifically focus on his interpretations and perspectives of eschatology with its relationship to Christian hope. It would be very difficult to treat Moltmann's thinking of eschatology discretely as one kind of sub-category, since it is such a dominant theme in his theology. Therefore, it becomes difficult to separate his eschatology from his Christological and ethical emphases. Thus, his Christology and ethics is eschatologically orientated just as his eschatology has a Christological grounding and ethical thrust.

What I will also be looking at is the difference between Moltmann's somewhat radical understanding of eschatology and “traditional” understandings of eschatology, as Moltmann's understanding of eschatology might be slightly different from that of traditional thinkers and acknowledging this difference can help us get a clearer understanding of eschatology and what it means. Moltmann focuses on the theme of eschatology with his primary concerns on the horizon of expectation for personal life, political and historical life, and for the life of the cosmos.

In his book, *The Coming of God*, which was published in 1996, Moltmann argues that Christianity is wholly and “entirely eschatology, not just in an appendix. It is hope, a vista, and a forward direction, and it is hence a new departure and a transformation of the present. An Eschatological thinking is primarily the indwelling of God in his people, in Christ and in our

hearts through his life-giving Spirit” (Moltmann, 1996:x-xvii). The first effect of eschatology is personal faith; new life in his world follows, and out of that springs the hope for the redemption of the body and the expectation of the transformation of this whole world into God’s kingdom.

Moltmann starts his exploration by explaining that eschatology was long been called the doctrine of the last things or the doctrine of the end. By these last things were meant events which will one day break upon humanity, history and the world at the end of time. These events include the return of Christ in universal glory, the judgement of the world and the consummation of the kingdom, the general resurrection of the dead and the new creation of all things. In actual fact, however, eschatology means the doctrine of the Christian hope, which embraces both the object of hope and also the hope inspired by it.

Moltmann’s approach to Christian theology is one uncompromisingly grounded in eschatology. As opposed to more traditional understandings of eschatology, which have a tendency to see it as simply one of the theological loci which theology seeks to explicate (e.g. Grudem, 1994:1091-1167), Moltmann understands Christian theology in terms of eschatology “from first to last” (Moltmann, 1967:16). As such, it is crucial not only to consider the future hope promised in Christ as one element of theological reflection and Christian witness, but as that very truth which grounds *all* of Christian faith and practice. Importantly for Moltmann this eschatology is much more than wishful thinking that things will improve one day, but rather the belief that the recognition of Christ crucified and raised in the present points forward to the promise of Christ’s universal reign. Seeing eschatology in this light transform what is often considered to be an esoteric doctrine reserved for the professional theologian into a reality which is the very ground of “all Christian proclamation, of every Christian existence and of the whole Church” (Moltmann, 1967:16).

In this regard, the perennial issue that confronts Christian theology at every turn is the question of the future. Moltmann suggests that the witness of the Old and New Testaments consistently draws the church’s attention to the “element of otherness,” which is inexplicable from the current state of affairs or the course of normal human experience. As such, when God reveals Godself in and through scripture, God does so as the “God of hope” who necessarily comes to humanity from outside the temporal-spatial nexus of human affairs, which is to say, “the future” (Moltmann, 1967:16). This means that when humanity encounters God, “future” and “hope”

become *essential* for the nature of God's own being and, therefore, all true encounters with the living God of Christian faith are ones in which this future hope is an irrevocable element.

Since the Christian account of God's future is one characterized by liberation, peace, justice and love, the anticipated fulfilment of these promises of God becomes life-giving realities which ground and transform Christian existence in the *present*. This dynamic of the future drawing itself into the present is the sort of reorienting of temporal existence to which Moltmann alludes when he suggests that "eschatology should not be the end of Christianity but its beginning" (Moltmann, 1967:15).

3.2.2. Eschatology and Revelation

In Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*, he displays a dependence on Barth's own early emphasis on the eschatological character of the Christian faith, where Moltmann adopts Barth's programmatic announcement from his commentary on the Romans as his own: "if Christianity be not altogether and unreservedly eschatology, there remains in it no relationship whatever with Christ" (Barth, 1933:314). Moltmann recognizes with Barth that the eschatological character of Christian faith is derived from its Christological content which necessitates speaking of his life, death, resurrection and return. It is from this vantage point that the Christian faith is capable of bearing witness to the world.

If we are to really grasp the true nature and essence of the eschatological message of Christ it becomes compulsory for us to obtain an interest and responsiveness towards the Old and New Testament definitions and accounts of promise. By this openness is simply meant that we should not focus on only one dimension of promise in the Old Testament but investigate what was first meant by it, and what it was trying to communicate at that point in different times, places and contexts (in the Old Testament), and also how it spoke to a later audience which lived in a different time with different circumstances and expectations (the New Testament).

This openness will help us to really explore and understand eschatology in its primary message and not just be trapped in a vacuum of one dimension or approach of it. Coming to terms with a Christian eschatology of promise that is understood in its various dimensions will then be an important device and medium for the unlocking of Christian truth. The exploration of promise in the biblical sciences will also provide us with a language of hope that will guide us through history to the present and future.

For Moltmann “promise is a fundamentally different thing from a world event which brings truth and harmony between humanity and the reality that concerns it. Promise announces the coming of a not yet existing reality from the future of truth” (Moltmann, 1967:84). This means that promise is something that is expected to be revealed and fulfilled in the future and thus cannot be seen as similar to the present realities and experiences because the promise intends to bring a future that is better than the present realities we are confronted with. Thus, the possibility and therewith the future arises entirely from God’s word of promise. The future of God’s promise cannot be measured by what is possible and impossible in the present because it brings something totally new, something that we imagined existed, because it is promised, but not yet experienced.

For Moltmann, Jesus Christ can only be understood in his revelation as the suffering, crucified and resurrected one, who will disclose his Kingship on his return to earth. This means that Christ’s revelation in the future is hidden, he then becomes a hidden God that humanity waits upon and is expecting in the future, whether in the near or far future, we do not know. Thus, we can say nothing about his future appearance as our ability to comprehend the future is limited. Our faith is the only medium that can help us to get a glimpse of what this future revelation holds, which is the fulfilment of Christ’s universal glory. This glimpse is possible because in the Christ event we are invited to see what the future revelation of God entails because what Christ revealed on earth (love over against evil) was God’s first step towards fulfilment of his promise.

This basically means that “faith is directed in hope and expectation towards the revelation of what it has already been found hidden in Christ” (Moltmann, 1967:85). Thus, the revelation of Christ moves beyond the idea of disclosing what was concealed but it is also the fulfilment of something that was promised. Based on this argument, Moltmann then explains that the revelation of Christ is not just hidden but it is also something that is not complete and has to be understood in the realm of something that is “not yet” here. This means that the assurance of hope comes from the integrity and faithfulness of God’s promise. This assurance of hope advances from its knowledge of how God acted faithfully in history and this knowledge also gives us the assurance that we need to know that God will fulfil and complete his promise in the future. For Moltmann the “assurance of hope without such knowledge would be a vague adventure and a historical speculation. It is not our experiences which brings faith and hope, but it is faith and hope that make experiences and bring the human spirit to an ever new and restless transcending of itself” (Moltmann, 1967:120).

3.2.3 Eschatology and the future (not yet)

In Moltmann's view, "if the future would bring something startlingly new, we have nothing to say of that, and nothing meaningful can be said of it either, for it is not in what is new and accidental but only in things of an abiding and regularly recurring character that there can be a logical truth" (Moltmann, 1967:18). The question for Moltmann becomes clear because if we cannot speak of hope in these terms, how can Christian eschatology articulate the future? However, Christian eschatology does not seek to treat the future in such a manner. Christian eschatology starts from a precise reality in history, which is the promise of God and secondly it declares the future of that reality with the fulfilment and completion of that promise in and through Jesus Christ.

Christian eschatology makes it clear that in the future Christ's way of life will prevail; it speaks of Christ in the future as the power that will prevail over evil, and the power of justice that will break down structures of injustice and oppression. Eschatology speaks of Christ in the future in relation to the fulfilment of God's promise of a "new creation with a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21). Thus, for Moltmann this implies that if "the crucified Christ has a future because of his resurrection, then that means that all statements and judgements about him must at once imply something about the future which is to be expected from him" (Moltmann, 1967:18).

Hence, the form in which Christian theology speaks of Christ cannot be the form of the Greek *logos* or of doctrinal statements based on experience, but only the form of statements-based experience, which is to say only the form of statements of hope and of promise for the future. "All predicates of Christ not only say who he was and is but imply statements as to who he will be and what is to be expected from him" (Moltmann, 1967:18). For Moltmann, "in the promise, the hidden future already announces itself and exerts its influence on the present through the hope it awakens" (Moltmann, 1967:20). This awakened hope comes from the Christ who came as the hope of the present and future.

Moltmann (1967:20) makes the startling argument that the statements of promise cannot be seen in relation or as parallel to the experience of present realities because hope's statements of promise are not the outcome of present experiences; rather they are shaped by the possibility of a new experience in the future. These statements of promise do not attempt to shed light on the present realities which we are familiar with; they rather want to shed light on the reality that is to come. These statements are dedicated to steer the present realities towards the future

and the transformation that is hoped for in the future. This argument of Moltmann's bring into conflict the present and the future, experiences of the present reality and hope of the future promise. For Moltmann, eschatology is clearly and absolutely focused on the future reality of the completion and fulfilment of promise. Moltmann goes on by arguing that "we are saved by hope, which means, at this point in argument, that we are saved by a promise, as nothing that we can see, and experience can give hope." A hope that is seen, argues Moltmann, is not hope, for why hope for something that you have already seen (Moltmann, 1967:18).

Based on the argument of hope as ultimately future orientated, Moltmann then asks the questions: "How can anyone speak of the future, which is not yet here, and of coming events in which he has not as yet had any part in? Are these not dreams, speculations, longings and fears, which must all remain vague and indefinite because no one can verify them" (Moltmann, 1967:19). Moltmann comes to the conclusion that the term "eschatology" can be a very complex and misleading term. There can be a doctrine of the last things, but this is one that cannot be based on the experience or observations of the current state of affairs. In Greek philosophical thought, logos always refer to those things which are already in existence and display themselves in consistent patterns of recurrence. Inasmuch as eschatology is etymologically dependent on the notion of logos, this term perhaps fails to capture the entirely open-ended and unanticipated character of God's promised future in Christ (Moltmann: 1976:20).

3.2.4 The believing of hope

Moltmann understands that faith does not stand aloof from hope or the promised future of God. For Moltmann, to believe means to exceed the boundaries that limit us from experiencing the full potential of hope: he calls it "the believing hope" (Moltmann, 1967:20). However, faith functions in a manner that does not bypass the troublesome and distressing realities of the present. Moltmann specifically refers here to the realities of suffering, guilt and despair. "Faith does not overstep these realities into heavenly utopia, and it does not dream itself into a reality of a different kind. It can overstep the bounds of life, with their closed wall of suffering, guilt and death, only at the point where they have in actual fact been broken through" (Moltmann, 1967:20).

Only when we follow Christ, who overcame death through his resurrection by the Father, and stood victorious over suffering, despair and god-forsakenness, we obtain a hope that is open, and which brings us a vision of a domain of joy and liberation. In this domain there is nothing

more that can oppress and bound us to suffering. Faith expands into hope where the peripheries that characterise the end of human hopes are interrupted and destroyed through the raising of the crucified Christ. It is in this moment that hope turns into an energy and excitement of endless possibilities that is born when boundaries that prevent hope from reaching its full potential are broken down. Moltmann furthermore explains that “faith recognizes the dawning of this future of openness and freedom in the Christ event. The hope thereby kindled spans the horizons which then open over a closed existence” (Moltmann, 1967:21). This means that hope has the ability to access the possibilities that were once smothered by limits created by sin and oppression and turn these possibilities into life-changing activities.

Faith is the bond that connects humanity to Christ; hope allows this faith to open up to the future of Christ’s promise of fulfilment. For this reason, can we see hope as nothing other than the indivisible consort of faith, as it is only together that hope, and faith can make a difference. When hope is separated from faith or faith separated from hope, whether in an “eloquent” or “elegant” manner, we are found guilty of having none, no hope nor faith. For Moltmann “hope is nothing than an expectation of those things which faith believed were truly promised by God” (Moltmann, 1967:22). In his *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann draws from Calvin’s earlier emphasis on the relationship between faith and hope by adopting Calvin’s argument that

faith believes God to be true; hope awaits the time when this truth shall be manifested. Faith believes that he is our Father; hope anticipates that he will ever show himself to be a Father toward us. Faith believes that eternal life has been given to us; hope anticipates that it will sometime be revealed. Faith is the foundation upon which hope rests; hope nourishes and sustains faith. For as no one except him who already believes His promise can look for anything from God, so again the weakness of our faith must be sustained and nourished by patient hope and expectation, lest it fail and grow faint (Moltmann, 1967:22; cf. Calvin (ed.), 1961:590).

By introducing this profound statement of Calvin in his *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann emphasises the importance of this hope/faith relationship as a very important principle for understanding eschatology because without faith in the promise of the future, eschatology cannot be perceived as a hope-giving medium. This brings Moltmann (1967:22) to conclude that by constantly reaffirming, revisiting and restoring hope, it energizes and revitalizes faith again and again with endurance, dedication and diligence. This defines an important dimension of the Christian faith. It teaches us that “faith has the priority but hope the primacy and without

faith's knowledge of Christ, hope becomes a paradise in our dreams and remains hanging in the air. But without hope, faith falls to pieces; it becomes a faint-hearted and ultimately a dead faith. It is through faith that we find the path to true life, but it is only hope that keeps us on that path" (Moltmann, 1976:20).

Moltmann emphasises this relationship to the core and it gives us a clear understanding that neglecting the importance of either faith or hope will result in a defective and deficient understanding of eschatology and the Christian faith. If we understand faith and hope on the grounds of the above mentioned, then it becomes impossible to see faith as something that tries to escape the world and its realities; rather it sees faith in the light of a future opening up for humanity, the humanity which Christ died for. That is why the cross becomes, for Moltmann, the ultimate symbol and event of hope. This is the hope that "does not merely find comfort and compassion in the cross, but it finds in the cross the objection of divine promise against suffering" (Moltmann, 1976:22).

This means that hope and faith stand in contradiction to anything that does not support its course. In 1 Corinthians 15:26, Paul calls death the last enemy of humanity and places death in direct opposition to the risen Christ and the hope that the resurrection brings. For Paul death becomes the enemy of hope as death threatens human life. Thus, explains Moltmann (1967:22), whenever faith expands and evolves into hope it causes not rest but unrest. "Those who hope in Christ can no longer accept reality as it is but should start to contradict it by the way we live as people of Christ who reflect the ways of Christ. Peace with God means conflict with the world" (Moltmann, 1967:23).

This hope causes the church to become a constant disturbance for society as it does not conform to the ways of society, which poses a threat to faith and hope, but it contradicts it by becoming an endless new inspiration towards the consciousness of righteousness, liberation, justice, and humility. For this reason, it becomes the responsibility of the church to commit itself to responding to the world with the hope that is in it; whenever that happens, "Christianity embraces its true nature and becomes a witness of the future Christ" (Moltmann, 1967:21). As long as hope does not embrace and transform the thoughts and actions of humanity, it remains ineffective. Hence Christian eschatology must introduce hope into worldly thinking and thought into the believing hope. For Moltmann faith needs hope as hope informs what faith believes.

3.2.5 Faith, sin and hope

Moltmann argues that faith which is not nurtured and driven by hope subjects itself to unbelief and the direct outcome of this unbelief is evidently hopelessness. Traditionally when we refer to the origin of sin, we look at man and woman wanting to be like God. However, that is only one side of sin. The other side of sin, explains Moltmann, is marked by pride in which humanity denies its dependency on God. But primarily for Moltmann, it is disobedience that threatens the hopeful on their way. Thus, the “temptation of disobedience consists not so much in the titanic desire to be like God but our weakness, timidity and weariness of not wanting to be what God requires us to be” (Moltmann, 1967:23).

God gives humanity the gift of promise, but humanity sinks in its belief of being incapable to become what God wants us to be. Sin is the reason for making us believe that we are incapable of being what God wants and provides an alternative which seems much easier to follow. The alternative is to accept the world as it is and conform to it. That is how sin targets and threatens believers. For Moltmann it is not “the evil one does but the good one does not do, not one’s misdeeds but one’s omissions, that accuse one. These omissions accuse one of lack of hope. For these so-called sins of omission all have their ground in hopelessness and weakness of faith. It is not so much sin that plunges us into disaster, but despair” (Moltmann, 1967:23).

Moltmann follows Josef Pieper’s reference to two forms of hopelessness that we can assume are both sins against hope. These two forms are presumption and despair. The form of presumption refers to the fact that we over hastily anticipate and expect the fulfilment of what we hope for from God. This usually results in disappointment and the rejection of God as he does not deliver at our preferred time and as we expected and anticipated. Moltmann also calls this a “premature and self-willed action” (Moltmann, 1967:24). Second is the form of despair which refers to the random anticipation that what we hope for from God will not be fulfilled by him. “Both forms of hopelessness, by anticipating the fulfilment or by giving up, nullifies the character of hope. These forms of hopelessness rebel against the patience in which hope trusts in the God of the promise and that brings Moltmann to conclude that despair too presupposes hope (Moltmann, 1967:25). The power to renew life resides neither in presumption nor in despair. It resides only in hope that is realistic, responsive, resilient and sure. And he who does not hope for the unexpected will not find it. “Only as long as the world and the people in it are in a fragmented and experimental state which is not yet resolved, is there any sense in earthly hopes” (Moltmann, 1967:25).

3.2.6 Does hope cheat humanity of the happiness of the present?

The primary question for Moltmann in this section is the question of hope in the present. Does eschatological hope focus too much on the past and future locations of hope and neglect or ignore the present which is the actual location in which its relevance is to be felt or where it is to be experienced? Is the present not the location wherein humanity truly finds its true and real existence? Moltmann explains the “most serious objection to a theology of hope springs not from presumption or despair, for these two attitudes of human existence presuppose hope, but the objection to hope arises from the religion of humble acquiescence in the present” (Moltmann, 1967:26).

For Moltmann memory binds us to a time that does not exist anymore. One remembers certain things that took place in the past but does not live it in the present (e.g. one remembers how one loved in the past but does not love in the present). This seem to be the case with hope as well. We hope for things to happen in the future and overlook the gifts that the present gives us (e.g. one hopes to be happy someday, and this expectation causes one to disregard the happiness that is in the present). This simply means that we are more focused on what we had in the past or what we want from the future so that we deprive ourselves of the gifts that the present has to offer.

For Moltmann (1967:28) it would seem as if memories and hopes cheat us from accessing the happiness of the present and of the ability of being fully present. It would appear as if the past and future either pulls one back to events that no longer exist or pushes one towards events that do not yet exist. We do not really pay attention to the present or attend to its potentialities, and if we do, we do so in comparison to past events or to take light from it to arrange the future. Moltmann would then come to the conclusion that if hope limits humanity to truly realize an “eternal present,” it robs not only humanity but also God of the possibilities for change and transformation in the present.

Moltmann then introduces another perspective on this subject. He explains that God controls time and whether in the past, present or future God is present. When God stepped into time to become human, he exceeded the boundaries that limit humanity to a single location and allow humanity to gain knowledge of the past and stirred the imagination of humanity to envision an eternal future. With God stepping into the present came the timeless acts of love and faith which is grounded in the absolute present. This means that in Christ, God disclosed a new future and God is present where we wait upon his promise of hope and transformation.

Moltmann explains that “when we have a God who calls into being the things that are not yet, then the future also becomes thinkable because it can be hoped for” (Moltmann, 1967:30).

This means that because we can hope for a future in which transformation can be expected we are empowered and enabled to face the realities of the future and to not escape to the past or future for a safe haven but to allow our faith and hope to illuminate the possibilities and the fullness of the present as we are made aware thereof by Christ. This brings us to the question: “Does this hope cheat man of the happiness of the present?” (Moltmann, 1967:31). For Moltmann the answer is an absolute no as “hope in itself is the happiness of the present. It pronounces the poor blessed, receives the weary and heavy laden, the humbled and wronged, the hungry and the dying, because it teaches them a better day is coming, a better day in which the kingdom of God will be realised, and they be invited to share in it” (Moltmann, 1967:32).

Hope is not a tool used to escape the realities of the present; rather it enables us to face it and transform it to something better. For Moltmann it is important to hope because without hope humanity will be trapped in the realities of the present and have no vision of the possibilities for things to improve. Without hope humanity accepts their realities and do nothing to turn the tide for the better. Hope gives humanity the ability to realise that something better is possible and if we strive towards it in our present realities, we might overcome the dangers of it and make things better for ourselves.

3.2.7 Promise in the eschatology of the prophets

Since the genesis of eschatology, as a theme of Biblical witness, the theological discourse of the concept has in many cases grown to become very unclear and vague, and in some cases, one may argue that it is ill-defined. It is defined by orthodox dogmatic beliefs as something referring to the last things and in exegetical and dogmatic language today the concept has obtained a variety of meanings relevant to the material it is applied to. In some cases, it is referred to as future, a location or sphere which exceeds the present or it is seen as something aimed at an end goal to be fulfilled.

For Moltmann (1967:126) promises and expectations are eschatological with its focus on the future. He makes specific reference to the faith of the nation of Israel which is based on the content of a future fulfilment of the promise God made to them. Thus, Israel is expecting and anticipating the fulfilment of this promise, a promise that gives them the assurance that something better awaits. Thus, Israel’s hope rests in the fulfilment of the promise of God.

Therefore, it will be difficult to find the threat of judgement and the promise of salvation in classical prophetic language because the character of classical prophetic language is Israel's belief in the promise. It is clear that for the prophets the concept of hope does not hold any apocalyptic character as its intent is clearly based on Israel's faith in God's promise. Thus, for the prophets the God who confronts Israel is the God of hope, the God who promised a new creation characterized by liberation, justice and peace. This promise holds the content of Israel's faith because from their obedience to God's covenant with them and their endurance in difficult times comes the reward of the fulfilment of God's promise. For Moltmann "the prophetic teaching is only eschatological when the prophets expelled Israel from the safety of the old serving action and suddenly shifted the basis of salvation to a future action of God" (Moltmann, 1967:130).

Another very important interpretation by Moltmann (1967:132) of the prophets is what Israel's faith in the promise expects from the presence of the God of promise. They expected guidance, preservation, protection, blessings, fullness of life etc. and these expectations came from their experiences of deprivation, of being abandoned to hunger, thirst, wretchedness, and oppression by their enemies. Their faith in the promise of God rests in the hopes that God's promise of renewal will overcome these threats of hunger, poverty, humiliation and offense, international wars and polytheism, and finally a godforsaken death (Moltmann, 1967:132). Contemporary Old Testament teachings refer to God as the God of promise and it is in his promise that Israel felt his presence and through which he revealed himself to them. The other reason for understanding revelation in the light of promise arises from the theology of the Reformers. For them, "faith is called to life by promise and is therefore essentially hope and it is in this promise that we have confidence and trust in the God who will not lie but will remain faithful to his promise" (Moltmann, 1967:135).

Moltmann recognises some kind of difficulty with relegating to these events to the last days. Moltmann (1967:135) explains that if we banish these events of promise to past or future, we cheat it of its immediate, inspiring and critical significance for the present. This basically means that if we are to explore hope only in the sphere of history or in the Old Testament promise, our outcome and the result of our understanding of hope will be deficient. Moltmann himself acknowledged this, that in neglecting the present we rob hope of its influence and effectiveness in the present. In his *Hope against Hope*, Richard Bauckham highlights this same issue: "traditional societies give priority to past and modern progressive society gives priority to the

future and declines the postmodern society of the present. The question is then: where is hope to be found in the failure of the secular hopes of the modern age?" (Bauckham, 2000:12).

Bauckham then refines eschatology for the sole purpose of helping us to understand our human role in hope and the new creation. Bauckham (2000:13) explains that over the history of its development, eschatology has only focused on the "not yet", as many scholars were trying to explore the future. However, in doing so, the "already" of eschatology has been neglected and causes the deficient understanding and interpretation of eschatology and hope. When we talk about the already of Christian eschatology, we talk about God who became human as Christ, the first part of the fulfilment of his Old Testament promise.

So, with this little knowledge of the "already", how can we answer Bauckham's question? In Moltmann's *Ethics of Hope* (2010), he explains that in Paul's letter to the Philippians Paul gives clear instructions on how to give hope to one another in the present; "Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then be of the same mindset as me, having the same love, being one in spirit and of mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interest but each of you to the interest of the others. In your relationship with others, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:1-5).

This text, explains Moltmann, helps us to understand that in our exploration of the topic of eschatology we need to move between the realms of the Old Testament and the New Testament. We need to know that it is important to consult the Old Testament as it provides significant insights which shine light on how the topic of hope and eschatology was received in a time prior to Jesus Christ and how it developed over time. However, Paul teaches us that only consulting the Old Testament for a complete understanding of eschatological hope will be deficient. We are cautioned by Paul that it would be a mistake to try and develop a theology of hope by drawing only from the Old Testament teachings. It will always fall short in some way or another. We need the New Testament, as hope draws its impulse from Jesus, his life, message, mission, cross and resurrection.

Moltmann's meditation on Christology provides us with some insight into this subject matter of hope on the grounds of Jesus Christ. But before we consult the New Testament for deeper insight on this theme and before we enter into conversation with Moltmann's Christological

meditation a summary of Moltmann's deepest convictions of what eschatology is and how it should be understood is in order.

3.2.8 Summary of Moltmann's eschatological groundings

The first remark of this summary wants to acknowledge that eschatology is a very complex theological theme and can be very confusing if not understood correctly or handled appropriately. Eschatology has become one of the most discussed and investigated theological topics of the twentieth century. My study specifically engages with Moltmann's theology and views on eschatology as he was one of the theologians who in the 1960s took the themes of eschatological hope as a way of opening up theology to the world and the future. Many contemporary theologians draw from his work. One can even say that the work of most 20th century theologians are expounded in agreement or opposition to Moltmann's work. This seems to be the reason why Moltmann is recognised in theology as one of the most influential figures. Contemporary theology even gave Moltmann the title, father of a theology of hope. Eschatology is the dominant theme of Moltmann's theology.

Even Moltmann's Christology and ethics resemble his eschatology. Contemporary theologians who studied Moltmann in-depth would argue that the rest of his theology developed from his eschatology which would be correct as Moltmann focuses on the theme of eschatology with his primary concerns on the horizon of future expectations for personal life, political and historical life and also for the life of all of creation. For Moltmann, Christianity is wholly eschatology and he made that specifically clear in his book, *The Coming of God*, published in 1996. Moltmann helps us to understand eschatology as "the last things" or the "doctrine of the end". By the last things, Moltmann refers to events in the future that will reveal themselves to humanity. These events are the return of Christ in universal glory, the judgement of the world and the consummation of the kingdom, the general resurrection of the dead and the new creation of all things.

The traditional definition of eschatology identifies two dimensions which are the "already" (which refers to God revealing himself in Christ and realising the kingdom of God on earth through Christ) and secondly, the "not yet" (which refers to what Moltmann calls the return of Christ in universal glory to fulfil his final Parousia). In this chapter it became clear that Moltmann invested more time and energy in the exploration of the "not yet" dimension of eschatology because for Moltmann Christianity is eschatology and it is hope, forward looking

and forward moving, therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. However, Moltmann acknowledges the fact that he is not ignoring the present aspect of eschatology, but he is not attending to it enough, and in neglecting the present dimension of hope we rob hope of its influence in the present. Richard Bauckham highlights the same issue that “traditional societies give priority to the past and modern progressive society gives priority to the future and declines the postmodern society of the present” (Bauckham, 2014:17).

Second, Moltmann explains in his *Theology of Hope* that the “one-real problem” of Christian theology is the problem of the future (Moltmann, 1967:14). For Moltmann, we have nothing to say about the future since it is unknown to us. This means that the nature of God lies in his promise that a future awaits us which is characterised by liberation, peace, justice and love, and these points also mark the life-giving elements of Christianity. Thus, Moltmann (1967:15) explains that eschatology should not be the end of Christianity but its beginning as it unfolds Christ’s revelation through his promise of fulfilment. This brings us to the third remark which Moltmann calls eschatology and revelation. For Moltmann, we must speak of Christ’s life, crucifixion, resurrection and *Parousia*, in order for it to speak effectively to the Christian faith and humanity at large, as it is through Christ revealed that we get a glimpse of what to expect in the future.

This means that the promise is something that is expected to be revealed and fulfilled in the future by Jesus Christ. Moltmann moves further by explaining that Jesus reveals himself as the Lord on the way to his coming lordship. The revelation of his future in his appearance is therefore a hidden one. He is the hidden Lord and the hidden Saviour. This hiddenness is what enlightens Christian anticipation for his future unveiling and aims at it and presses towards it. Moltmann (1967:85) makes clear that faith is directed in hope and expectation towards the revelation of what it has already found hidden in Christ. Christ’s future is not merely the unveiling of something that was hidden, but also the fulfilment of something that was promised. Thus, revelation of Christ should not just be seen as hidden but also as unfinished and has to be related to the reality which is not. Our fourth remark stresses the same idea of faith in his topic of the believing of hope.

For Moltmann (1976:20), hope opens up this faith to the comprehensive future of Christ. Hope is therefore the inseparable companion of faith. Hope is nothing else than the expectation of those things which faith has believed to have been truly promised by God. Hope gives faith in Christ its breadth and leads it into life. The hope thereby kindled spans the horizons which then

open over a closed existence. Faith binds humanity to Christ. The one thing that threatens this faith is sin or disobedience, which brings us to the fifth remark of sin, despair and hope. Moltmann (1967:22) emphasises that as long as hope does not embrace and transform the thoughts and actions of humanity, it remains ineffective. Disobedience is the sin which most profoundly threatens the believer. It is not the evil one does but the good one does not do, not one's misdeeds but one's omissions, that accuse one.

Our sixth remark looks at Moltmann's question; "Does hope cheat man of the happiness of the present" (Moltmann, 1967:20). The most serious objection to a theology of hope springs not from presumption or despair, for these two basic attitudes of human existence presuppose hope, but the objection to hope arises from the religion of humble acquiescence in the present. Is it not always in the present that man is truly existent, real, contemporary with oneself, acquiescent and certain memory binds one to the past that no longer is. Hope casts one upon the future that is not yet. For Moltmann the answer is an absolute no, for hope is in itself the happiness of the present. It pronounces the poor blessed, receives the weary and heavy laden, the humbled and wronged, the hungry and the dying, because it perceives the Parousia of the Kingdom for them.

However, the good news that eschatology pronounces refers to the future and does not necessarily address the social issues such as poverty, hunger, and war in the present. Hope does not rob people of their happiness not because it pronounces the good news of the future but because it realises God's presence in human life, knowing that by faith we walk with and in Christ to one day receive the gift of fulfilment. This brings us to our final remark which reflects on the prophetic promise of eschatology. Moltmann makes a very important interpretation of the prophets. He explains that the ancient faith in the promise of God expected the nearness and the presence of God, guidance, preservation, protection, blessings, fullness of life etc. and these expectations were given content from the concrete experience of deprivation, of being abandoned to hunger, thirst, wretchedness, and the oppression and menace by their enemies. These remarks develop Moltmann's Christology and give us a clear framework of what Moltmann is trying to achieve with his theology of hope. This is to help us understand that hope can only be realised if it stands in relationship with the fulfilment of God's promise and the revelation of Christ's presence in our present realities.

3.3. Christological groundings

If we are to explore the Christological implications of hope we need to pay specific attention to the life of Jesus Christ, his work, his teachings, his message and his ethics as it is these attributes of his that brought hope to life in the realities of his time. Moltmann's meditation provides us with a framework for these insights, and in this sense, it is also "an incarnate hope." In this part of the chapter we will specifically engage with Moltmann's *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1993). This book explains hope, not only as the way of Christ leading from his resurrection to his second coming, but this hope also finds character in his ethical and social life. It also explores Jesus' social impact and how he teaches communities to live in a way that would transform their social realities. It also related to the crucified God as the One who, in his abandoned death, identified with the most wretched and the most hopeless. The crucified God shows his suffering love on the cross, signifies God's compassion in his passion, death and cross with those who suffer. Thus, the social impact of Christ is greatly influenced by His identification with the suffering, poor and the most wretched as it would be his reality on the cross.

3.3.1 The Resurrection and the Future of Jesus Christ

In his *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann (1967:139) explains that the event that manifests revelation in the New Testament is Messianic in nature and it indicates a history of promise, which means that God reveals Godself in the New Testament through Christ as Messiah, to complete and fulfil the promise of God's kingdom on earth. Generally, when one talks about the revelation of God in the New Testament one would make special reference to Christ's cross and resurrection which reveals God's glory in his Kingship, characterised by righteousness, life and freedom, and these were all aimed at the salvation of humanity. In the gospel, the Christ event reveals the future already made known in the present. This means that in Christ we get a glimpse of what is to be expected in the future, the fulfilment of God's universal glory. "The proclamation of Christ thus places humanity in the midst of an event of revelation which embraces the nearness of the coming Lord" (Moltmann, 1967:139).

According to Moltmann, it became clear that the New Testament communities were searching for a God who would understand their experiences and who would accompany them in their difficulties, a God that would understand their experiences and who would be their companion in these experiences. God revealed himself as this God in Jesus Christ. Humanity would find

their most perfect teacher, leader and companion in Christ. Seeing the incarnation of Christ, as the one everlasting and unchangeable divine Being as a mystery, was the approach of Christology assumed by the ancient church in many forms. The problem of the incarnation came about from the fact that the “Father of Jesus Christ was identified with the one God of Greek metaphysics and had the attributes of this God ascribed to him” (Moltmann, 1967:140). However, for Moltmann, if God’s divinity is to be found in his immutability, unconcern and unresponsiveness to humanity, then the historic working of this God in the Christ event of the cross and resurrection becomes as impossible to uphold as does his eschatological promise of the future.

So, the question then is, how exactly are we to regard the connection between promise and the gospel and the connection between the New and the Old Testaments? For Moltmann the Christ event is an historical event, as it was the fulfilment of a promise made in in history. Thus, Christian faith does not stand aloof from history, but it is an essential part of history. Faith must be seen as the result of trust in the future promise. Therefore, “the knowledge of the future which is kindly informed by promise is therefore a knowledge in hope” (Moltmann, 1967:203). For Moltmann, resurrection and eternal life are the future that is promised and thereby calls humanity to obedience for it is in our acts of obedience that we are evoking hope. Just as the urge of promise is towards fulfilment, so is the urge of faith towards obedience. As the urge of hope is towards the life that is promised and finally received, so the urge of the raising of Christ is towards life in the Spirit and towards the eternal life that is the completion of all things (Moltmann, 1967:213).

3.3.2 The way of Jesus Christ

Moltmann devoted one of the three volumes which he calls his systematic contributions to theology to the theme of Christology. He titled this contribution, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, as it makes it possible to understand the path of Christ as the way leading from his resurrection to his Parousia. “The way of Jesus Christ” is not merely a Christological category. It is an ethical category as well, and anyone who really believes in Jesus as the Christ of God will follow him along the way he himself took. Moltmann (1990:136) starts by explaining and emphasising Jesus’ messianic character from the historical belief that Jesus, in his entirety was messianic. When he spoke or performed acts of healing, teaching and comfort he did it as Messiah which put him in an identifying relationship with God and humanity. These acts mark Jesus as a figure of hope.

The reason for the community's acknowledgement that Jesus was the Christ is undoubtedly the Easter event (Moltmann, 1990:138). By this we mean the appearance of Christ in the Glory of God after his death with the theological conclusion drawn by the people involved that God raised him from the dead. The confession says what Jesus is, on the basis of his resurrection, but it does not say who he is. According to Moltmann only in remembering Christ's social impact, his public life, his message and his relationship with people can we say who he is. For Moltmann, "Easter determines the form of belief in Jesus Christ, but not its content" (Moltmann, 1990:138). What determines the content of this belief in Christ is the history of Christ's life, his acts of love and compassion, his communion with the marginalised and excluded and his objection to unjust systems that oppress people.

For Moltmann (1990:140), as the Child of God, Jesus demonstrates this nearness to God by having mercy and compassion on the poor and suffering, and by doing that he demonstrated God's feminine attributes. It should also be noted that this relationship between child and parent is wholly Pneumatological as the Spirit of God created this relationship and it is the driving and consistent force behind this relationship. Jesus was also a person in social relationships. Whenever Jesus went into Galilee, the poor who had been reduced to misery gathered round him. The distress of the people awakened in him the divine compassion.

His call to discipleship was directed to the multitude. The multitude were the poor, the homeless, the "non-persons" in society. They had no identity, no power, no voice and no representatives, with people in dominant classes shutting them out into social no-man's-land. So, Jesus' solidarity with these people has a certain universalism, which takes in all the poor who have been reduced to misery. Jesus takes his family, "the damned of this earth", and discovers among them the dawning future of the kingdom and God's new creation. His compassion is not charitable condescension. It is the form which the divine justice takes in an unjust world.

3.3.3 The three-dimensional person of Jesus Christ

In order to help us understand the nature of Jesus' life in our confessions, Moltmann (1990:149) introduces Christ in three ways.

First, to confess Jesus as the Christ of God means to perceive him in his eschatological person. He is the kingdom of God in person, and the beginning of the new creation of all things. In this way, he is the bearer of hope for the world. In him, believers recognize the messianic human

being. Second, to confess Jesus as the Christ of God means to perceive him in his theological person. “He is the child of God, who he calls Abba, and as the child of God he lives wholly in God and this opens the unique relationship with God to all who believe to become children of God” (Moltmann, 1990:150). In this person of Christ, believers recognized the childlike human being. Finally, to confess Jesus as the Christ of God means to perceive him in his social person. Jesus’ entire life and work portrays him as a social person as he spends most of his time and work in the midst of the poor and marginalized. He is the brother of the poor and the comrade of the people, the friend of the forsaken, the sympathizer with the sick. He heals through solidarity and communicates his liberty and his healing power through his fellowship. In him, women and men recognised the brotherly and sisterly human being. In each of these three dimensions, Jesus as the Christ of God is a public person, not a private one.

3.3.4 Summary of Moltmann’s Christological groundings

First, Christian eschatology speaks of Christ and his future. When we speak of the future of Christ, which is described elsewhere as the Parousia of Christ or the return of Christ, we referring to Christ still being present even as we await his return. According to Moltmann (1967:229), the future of Christ is mainly a matter of unveiling Christ’s coming as it is described in the New Testament as the revelation. He will be revealed, not only in the church but to everyone, as the person he is; in full clarity and publicity the “it is finished” will come to light. Thus, the Christian hope expects from the future of Christ not only the unveiling, but also the final fulfilment. The Christian expectation is directed to no-one other than Christ who has come, but it expects something new from him, something that has not been experienced and has not yet happened. Faith in Jesus as the Christ is not the end of hope, but it is the confidence in which we hope.

Second, for Moltmann, Christian hope will never be fully grasped if we attempt to understand it only in terms of promise and future. Moltmann stresses the importance of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection as significant themes for our understanding of hope. These events give us insight into the future of Jesus Christ. The incarnation is grounded in a soteriological message of the Christian hope. This means that Jesus’ incarnation calls Christians to continue the way of living that he embodied and manifested. We are to conform to his ways of doing things through obedience. Third, the way of Jesus Christ teaches us about his earthly life and his social impact. It teaches us about Jesus’ selfless acts of love and care, about his compassion towards the poor and the sick and his companionship with those who suffered. These acts of Jesus serve

as a framework and guideline for us in our journey on earth and our role in society. It helps us to understand how we ought to live and what we ought to become, a hope producing humanity. It calls us to discipleship so that we can serve each other as opposed to oppressing and exploiting each other.

Moltmann explains that to confess Jesus as a Divine being means to perceive him as an eschatological person. He is the kingdom of God in person, and the beginning of the new creation of all things. In this way, he is the bearer of hope for the world. In him, believers recognize the messianic human being. Second, to confess Jesus as the Christ of God means to perceive him in his theological person. He is the child of God, who he calls Abba, and as the child of God he lives wholly in God and this opens the unique relationship with God to all who believe to become children of God. In him, believers recognized the childlike human being.

To confess Jesus as the Christ of God means to perceive him in his social person. Jesus' entire life and work portrays him as a social person as he spends most of his time and work in the midst of the poor and marginalized. He is the brother of the poor and the comrade of the people, the friend of the forsaken, the sympathizer with the sick. He heals through solidarity and communicates his liberty and his healing power through his fellowship. Jesus' ethical nature provides us with clear guidelines of how we should live in order to realise the kingdom of God on earth. What this part of Moltmann's work teaches us is that Christ is the person publicly commissioned by God, and he personifies the public concern of people.

3.4 Ethical groundings

3.4.1 Ethics of hope

Our final consideration of Moltmann's understanding of hope is found in his *Ethics of Hope* (2010), where he is able to make explicit in a more systematic way what was latent in his writings since the 1970s. Again, Moltmann's eschatological themes find strong expression in this chapter. Moltmann focuses in the first chapter of this book on the relationship between hope and action. He reflects on Kant's question: "What can I hope for?", which always affects the various choices of action which are open to us in response to the question: "What should I do?" We become active insofar as we hope. We hope insofar as we can see into the sphere of the future possibilities. We take in hand what we think is possible. If, for example, we hope that the world will continue to be as it is now, we shall keep things as they are. If we hope for an alternative future, we shall already change things as far as possible in accordance with that.

With reference to Kantian language we can say that Moltmann is talking about an “acting impelled by hope, one not in the mode of ought but in the mode of can” (Moltmann, 2010:3).

For Moltmann (2015:50) hope is always a tense expectation and it consists of the ability to always awaken and alert all our senses, so that we may identify and grab the opportunities for things that we hope for, whenever and wherever they manifest themselves. This is what makes hope different from mere expectation or patiently waiting for something to happen. This is hope that inspires agency for change. This is hope that calls us to recognise our potential to transform our societies and to improve our world. This hope triggers our senses to realise our full potential of what we could be. This also helps us understand that waiting for the future promise of God to be fulfilled, does not mean we have to conform to the conditions and realities of the present but rather that we can work towards changing our realities for the better. Thus, for Moltmann, this means that the people who await God’s universal glory in justice and righteousness no longer accept the so-called normative way of living created by society, for these people know that a better world is possible and the change in the present is necessary.

Moltmann (2010:52) acknowledges that change in the present is necessary but not easy as possibilities for change are threatened by the ideologies instilled in people by economic and political capitalism, power, greed and exploitation. These are the threats in society that demolish the work of society towards the common good of humanity and the world. The secular world has created the ideology that there is not enough for everyone. This idea has forced many people into existential anxiety. The reason for the shortfall and deficiency of resources in society is due to the ideology that growth is the only important thing in society, and it became the driving force of life. The modern conviction is that the progress of the minority is more important than the common good of all people.

Moltmann remarks that “the general struggle for jobs, earnings and profits is supposed to mobilize the energies of the general public. In our world today, every man for himself, is the slogan and solidarity get left behind” (Moltmann, 2010:52). The one distinct characteristic of modern society is the division of communities by the mentality of winner and loser, where winner takes all, and losers are pushed to the margins where they are left to perish. This mentality of communities has resulted in the fear of not making it in this world and the fear of being excluded and being pushed to the margins. This fear has led to boundless greed for life and an unquenchable hunger for power. Competition in modern societies has nothing to do

with satisfying the basic needs of life rather it has everything to do with social prestige and recognition of one's own social class (Moltmann, 2010:54).

Modern existential anxiety tells people: "you're nothing if you don't have anything – make something of yourself. If you don't, you will be despised and looked down on" (Moltmann, 2010:57). This is quite ironic because the same people who tell you to make something of your life refuse to give you access to the resources to do so, creating social struggle. Everyone competes against everyone else. Life becomes a fight of each against all. This greed for life and this hunger for recognition are the reverse of the suppressed fears of dropping down the social ladder and of death (Moltmann, 2010:57).

Moltmann (2010:64) explains that humanity have been trapped in a mentality of "You only live once" – a mentality that forces people to look out only for oneself, to avoid missing out on something. This kind of mentality causes hope to lose its relevance and power in human life, because, if solidarity gets left behind, if concerns for the general good get lost, if what belongs to everyone is viewed only as unclaimed property which can be claimed without punishment, the result is a socially frigid world, without any emotion, passion or care. In this "dog-eats-dog" society to love one's neighbour is not realistic as everyone's neighbour is themselves. We seem to find it difficult to love anyone aside from outside of ourselves. There is no love, fellowship, community, unity, humility, peace and no trust. Once public spirit disappears from a society, trust disappears too. "It is the loss of solidarity and commitment to the common good, together with the loss of trust, which brings about society's division into poor and rich, the difference between the present and the future generation, the impoverishment of the people in the countries of the Third World" (Moltmann, 2010:64).

The problem is that we know all these things, we are aware of its dangers, but we continue to live in ways that feed these ideologies and ways of living. We refuse to step outside of ourselves and consider the common good of humanity. It is as if we are incapacitated and debilitated to do anything about it, so we just accept and continue with this way of living. Moltmann called this way of life, humanity's "self-made fate", a fate that will not be survived if it is maintained. The only way to survive this suicide trap is to act against these ideologies and to start loving beyond oneself (Moltmann, 2010:64). These consequences are not inevitable; they are the sickness which the modern world has brought upon itself. These issues have forced us to ask the question: how do we talk about hope now? Does the idea of a promised future by the Old Testament and even the New Testament help us to exterminate these major plagues that darken

our vision and path for a better and new future? These realities have alerted us that we can no longer talk about hope as if it is in the far distance, something that will come in time; rather, hope should become action, it should explore the possibilities to change these destructive forces in God's world.

To answer these questions, Moltmann takes us back to the resurrection hope of Christ. He explains that this hope inspires us to commit ourselves to love others as we love ourselves at all times. This love enables us to seek universal victory of life over death. This hope teaches us that the fate or destiny of humanity is not to perish but to survive and to flourish. In order to achieve this victory, we need to acquire a human life that corresponds to the ways of Christ. Moltmann (2010:66) introduces us to a number of points that can assist us in accomplishing this victory of life over death. First, Moltmann explains that life should be affirmed. This means that in order for life to grow it needs an affirming environment. Moltmann uses the example of a baby in a mother's womb. "Before the child is born, it must already be affirmed in its mother's womb, for it can only grow and develop and live healthily in an atmosphere of affirmation" (Moltmann, 2010:66). This means that a child can only learn to affirm itself when it feels safe and when its life is affirmed. An atmosphere of rejection and denial would cause it to weaken spiritually and deteriorate physically.

Second, life must be affirmed and actively accepted. Life must be accepted in order to reach its full potential. Positive acceptance and positive esteem can activate and inspire the body and soul to engage in a process of making things better. If it is rejected and treated with no value, it will withdraw into isolation and become defensive. People start to see themselves and worthless and begin to despise themselves and lose vitality. They accept the conditions of their life and have no desire to challenge the realities that threaten their lives. Third, human life is participation and sympathy.

Life becomes alive when it finds that other people enter into it. It comes alive in communion with others, unity and the concern for others. Life becomes alive when it can enter into other life, meaning participating in the struggles and triumphs of others. To be humanly present means to be interested in the lives of others. As long as you are interested you are alive. Human life is alive as long as it exists in relationships. The loss of relationships leads to social death. Finally, human life is marked by a striving for fulfilment. This means that the potential of human life is supposed to be fulfilled in such a way that life can be completely affirmed, and that the person can feel satisfied. According to Moltmann, there are two ways of leading a

meaningful life: “either through self-fulfillment or participation in human responsibility” (Moltmann, 2010:66).

3.4.2 Preliminary orientation: politics and the whole of life

“We are living in a nuclear age, a reality which is shared by all nations and people. Following the tragic event of Hiroshima in 1945, when an atomic bomb was dropped on it, this terror has become a shared reality in the history of the world. Humanity is facing a mutual threat and shares the danger of annihilation. Political powers are using these kinds of power, similar to the Hiroshima event, to scare nations and threaten the lives of innocent people. They do this to gain more power or to simply cause devastation and destruction” (Moltmann, 2010:68). For Moltmann, the only way to challenge and change this reality is when humanity shows a common concern for human life and if humanity acts in unity. Only then can human life guarantee survival.

We find in the Biblical traditions and the Christian experience that only in righteousness and justice will we be able to inspire and create lasting peace. Thus, there is no road to peace other than just action and concern for worldwide righteousness and justice. We can say with confidence that there is no peace where injustice and violence prevail, even if law and order are enforced. On this point it is necessary to argue that law and order are sometimes the reasons why the evils of injustice and violence prevail, as they are set up not to protect the common good of all society but to protect only those who makes major contributions in the forms of finances and resources for political power and economic growth. And these injustices always create inequalities and destroy the balance in society. Unjust systems can only be kept alive with the help of violence and people who justify them (Moltmann, 2010:69).

Another important view that Moltmann (2010:72) brings to light is the idea of self-love and self-acceptance as it mainly determines one`s response to human life. A Christian ethic that ought to follow the example of Christ must do so with the intent to serve life, importantly the life of oneself. One should love one`s neighbour as oneself, and that presupposes a healthy self-love. The person who despise themselves will not be able to love their neighbour either. Someone who is uncertain in themselves will make their neighbour uncertain too.

To accept oneself because one has been accepted by God purely out of love liberates us from the condition which Kierkegaard described in his *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orientated Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin* (1981) as

despairing at being oneself or despairing at not being oneself. One must become comfortable with who one is so that one's self-love reflects the love of God for his creation and human life. We must also be cautious that self-love does not become an egoistic form of being, because egoistic, particularistic interests will bring about the downfall of the world. It is only in communal love and communal life that it can maintain itself and survive (Moltmann, 2010:165).

For Moltmann, "The man who wants the world to stay just as it is, do not want it to stay at all" When don't seek to change and address the wrongs in the world we subject it to destruction (Moltmann, 2010:229). What this saying teaches us is that we have become very comfortable with life as it is as long as we are not harmed in the process. In doing nothing, our self-deception destroys us. In Christianity we do not make use of God to change the world, but we change the world in order to enjoy the world.

3.4.3 The calling of Christians in society

For Moltmann, "the coming lordship of the risen Christ cannot be merely hoped for and waited upon. This hope and expectation also set its stamp on life, action and suffering in the history of society. Hence, mission means not merely propagation of faith and hope, but also historic transformation of life" (Moltmann, 2010:328). This means that, in order to follow the path, set out for humanity by God, we need to devote ourselves to ultimate obedience to his Word of his word. We are to follow his example and adopt his way of living and thinking. We need to become servants of one another and not dominant forces that destroy human trust and relationships. In order to achieve this goal, we need to embody the ultimate element of Christ's being love.

According to Moltmann (2010:328), Jesus is said to be fully human, but the love that determined the conduct of his life was God's love. This love accompanies faith and hope as the three pillars of God's saving activity for humanity. These pillars became visible in the life and work of Christ, and for the church and believers to fulfil Christ's saving activity on earth we must not just embody these pillars but live them. Therein rest the endless possibilities for a renewed hope and new future in which loving one's neighbour becomes the virtue instead of the endless hunger for power and greed. Thus, "not to be conformed" by this world does not mean merely to be transformed in oneself but to transform in opposition and creative expectation the face of the world in the midst of which one believes, hopes and loves.

The vocational ethics of Protestantism has always been considered very important. In the Augsburg Confession, for instance, we read: “The call to discipleship of Christ is not aimed at faithful and loving fulfilment of our calling under the prescribed conditions, whatever God sets it out to be them” (cf. Moltmann, 2010:330). According to the New Testament our calling to participate as believers in this world is unchangeable. This means that, for Moltmann, our vocation is grounded in our obedience to Christ’s mission and should not and cannot be compromised by time but must be enriched and fueled through constant reflection on our responsibility to fulfil the promise of God in the present by living as disciples, which means to stand with the poor and marginalized and be the companion of those who suffer. Our calling to discipleship must ultimately and always be grounded in the mission of Christ.

3.4.4 Summary of Moltmann’s ethical groundings of his meditation on hope

First of all, Moltmann’s ethical grounding of his meditation on hope found expression in his *Ethics of Hope*. This section of the chapter focusses on Moltmann’s response to social, economic, political and ecological issues. Again, Moltmann’s eschatological themes found strong expression in this section. Moltmann (2010:3) explains that when we ask the question; “what should I do?” we become active as we realise something needs to be done in order to transform our realities and global conditions; this is where hope is born. We hope insofar we can see into the sphere of future possibilities. We take in hand what we think is possible. If, for example, we hope that the world will continue to be as it is now, we shall keep things as they are. If we hope for an alternative future, we shall already change things as far as possible in accordance with that. Unlike Kant, Moltmann is talking about an acting impelled by hope, one not in the mode of ought but in the mode of can.

Moltmann’s ethical meditation distinguishes hope from mere expectation or a patient waiting because for him this is hope that awakens our senses for the potential of what we could be and how we can change the world. Moltmann emphasises the fact that the common good of humanity and society are destroyed by political and economic capitalism, power, greed and exploitation and that competition in modern societies has nothing to do with satisfying the basic needs of life. It has to do with social prestige, and recognition in one’s own social class (Moltmann, 2010:54).

Moltmann's *Ethics of Hope* provides the outline of how we should respond to these life-threatening issues. It teaches us first of all that we should not conform to the world but be transformed by our obedience to what God called us to. We have to act and live in accordance with Christ's will and be obedient to Christ's ways. Discipleship, for Moltmann, shapes our obedience. As disciples of Christ we need to embody Christ's ethics and his faith. When we live a life that reflects and characterizes these conditions, we give birth to endless possibilities of renewal in communal and individual life, renewal which is inspired and informed by our faith, and our faith finds its life in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit stirs our imagination so that we may imagine possibilities for change and renewal. In the Christological section we explored Jesus as a social person and in his social character we find our Christian calling in society, which is to live a life that resembles Christ's ethics and conduct. That is Moltmann's primary message in this section: that we should change the world by following Christ's ways of living and live in a way that promotes the common good of all creation. That is where hope is born and where hope lives.

3.5 Moltmann on Hope Incarnate: Critical reflection

This final section of the chapter will specifically reflect on Moltmann's relevance to the study. It will critically reflect on Moltmann's arguments, to establish the relevance of his theology of hope to the theses of this study. Moltmann's theology gave us great insight to the eschatological, Christological and ethical implications of hope and we will now discuss how it helps us to understand hope as a theme that is Christologically informed and opposed to the hope that is being widely interpreted and understood today. This section will introduce secondary literature to help us establish Moltmann's relevance for this study.

Before I turn to a discussion of the way Moltmann's understanding of hope is applicable and relevant to my study we need to acknowledge that there have been a number of people who have been critiquing Moltmann's work for a number of reasons. One that seems the most relevant and who gave a very sharp critique on Moltmann's theology of hope came from Noel Woodbridge, senior academic at the South African Theological Seminary. Woodbridge wrote a paper in 2009, which was published in Johannesburg, South Africa, in response to Moltmann's *Theology of hope*, with the title "Revisiting Moltmann's Theology of Hope in the light of its renewed impact on emergent theology".

I specifically chose Woodbridge as my conversation partner because he is interpreting and responding to Moltmann from a South African perspective, and since that is my background

too, it can really help me in understanding the value of his critique to my own on Moltmann's work. This kind of approach can help us to establish Moltmann's relevance or not by recognising questions that Moltmann failed to ask or questions Moltmann failed to answer, which influenced the outcome of his theology.

Moltmann makes a very profound statement when he explains that "If progress leads to the annihilation of human and earthly life on this earth, hope for the future of life lies in the preservation of the earth's sustainability. The man who wants the world to stay just as it is, doesn't want it to stay at all" (Moltmann, 2010:229). What this teaches us is that we have become very comfortable with life as it is as long as we are not harming (or harmed) in the process. In doing nothing our self-deception destroys us and the world. Moltmann explains that in Christianity we do not make use of God to change the world, but we change the world in order to enjoy God.

In his revisiting of Moltmann's theology of hope, Woodbridge makes a number of remarks to be considered. First, he explains that Moltmann urges Christian thought to pay less attention to the glory days of the past and to rather live in the hope for the future that comes from God, and that we need to see God living not above us but in front of us. For Moltmann God's promise to act in the future is more important than the fact that he has acted in the past. However, it should be mentioned that this focus on the future does not mean withdrawal from the world, in the hope that a better world will somehow evolve, but active participation in the world in order to assist in the coming of that better world (Woodbridge, 2009:107).

Second, he highlights that Moltmann proposes that Christian hope is to be the primary source of motivation in the life and thought of the church and Christian life as hope empowers the Christian mission of the church. The Kingdom of God gives the church new insight of the reality of the world and what the world ought to be and the Kingdom of God also provides us with clear guidelines on how to materialise a better world and to not simply see God's kingdom as a private vision of personal salvation but as communal and universal. Moltmann understands Christian faith as essentially hope for the future of man and this earth promised by the God of the exodus and the resurrection of the crucified Jesus (Woodbridge, 2009:108).

Third, the promise of God, explains Woodbridge, inspires "creative discipleship" in the world by focusing on the "hermeneutics of Christian mission" which I totally agree with, as the Christian mission is ultimately the embodiment of Christ's work and vision for the world. However, I want to argue at this point that not only the promise of God provides a creative

sense of possibility of what discipleship might accomplish with a hermeneutic of Christian mission, but our understanding of discipleship should not neglect the importance and significance of the Holy Spirit in our work in this unfinished world as it is first and foremost the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms our thoughts and inner being so that we may fully and completely participate in the *missio Dei*.

Fourth, this hermeneutical framework of Christian mission should assist us in identifying new possibilities that inspire humanity to move away from what the world says and to explore the Christological and Pneumatological realities that stand in line with the kingdom of God. Finally, in the words of Woodbridge, for Moltmann, “theology of hope is anything but a superficial affirmation of the ‘power of positive thinking’. Rather, Moltmann argues that we must acknowledge the suffering and injustice that mark our present experience in the world. Only then can we feel the force of, and give witness to, God’s promise to heal the world” (Woodbridge, 2009:111-112).

In Woodbridge’s interpretation of *Theology of Hope* he makes the remark that perhaps Moltmann has left out a very significant dimension in his theology of hope. Woodbridge explains his reason for this by arguing that Moltmann focuses only on the social transformation of the future world and neglects the most important element of the gospel message which is the spiritual gospel concerning the present transformation of the life and social situation of individual believers.

For Woodbridge, Moltmann’s rejection of the spiritual aspect of the Christian hope is like “throwing away the diamond ring, while merely retaining the casket, because it is considered to be of greater importance” (Woodbridge, 2009:112). I would, however, not concur that Moltmann rejected the spiritual element of the gospel message. Moltmann makes it clear in his books *The Crucified God*, *The Coming of God* and *The Way of Jesus*, which are all contributions and unfolding explanations of his theology of hope, that the faith of believers is pivotal in understanding the promise of God as it is because of their faith and spiritual endurance that they do not give up and conform to the world but await the fulfilment of the promise in the renewal of all things including their social condition. Thus, I believe that Moltmann did explore the spiritual dimension of the gospel.

Moltmann has also been well received by South African theologians and scholars as a result of the relevance and significance of his theology to the South African theological discourse and the spiritual emphasis of his contribution. One theologian in particular speaks to the heart of

this study as he uses Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God* and *The Coming of God* in his quest for "Faith Seeking Answers in Life and Death". John De Gruchy, in his book *Led into Mystery: Faith Seeking Answers in Life and Death*, which he wrote as tribute to his son Steve de Gruchy who tragically drowned in 2010, dedicates a chapter in his book to the topic of hope entitled "The Hope that is Within Us". In this chapter De Gruchy argues that before we can confess our belief in heaven, we must learn to love life and the earth; that is how we come came to truly understand what hope is. He makes a number of secondary arguments in support of this claim. These arguments stem from De Gruchy's idea that "heaven and earth may be distinct realities, but they are intertwined, the one invisible the other visible, the one eternal the other time-bound, co-existing and interpenetrating like body and soul" (De Gruchy, 2013:192).

For De Gruchy, to believe in heaven or to await the fulfilment of God's promise does not mean primarily to focus on something that is in the far future, something that is not within reaching distance. This does not mean losing focus or even ignoring what is happening on earth. Our waiting on God's fulfilment of his promise, believing in heaven and in the Kingdom of God should inspire us to see earth differently and to live in a way that marks the characteristics of heaven here on earth. To explain this De Gruchy uses the phrase "to lay up treasures in heaven" (De Gruchy, 2013:192), as Jesus advises us to do, which does not mean believing in a way that would win God's favor so that we may secure our place in heaven; rather, for De Gruchy it means living on earth in the way that is commanded by God so that the kingdom of God may be realized on earth. At this point in his argument De Gruchy turns to Bonhoeffer's lecture of 1929 in Barcelona which Bonhoeffer concludes by saying that "only those who engage the world in its struggles, yearn beyond this, and have but one wish: may our world pass away and your kingdom come" (De Gruchy, 2013:192).

De Gruchy follows the same line of thinking as Bonhoeffer and Moltmann when he seeks to emphasise that humanity ought not to escape the earth no matter how critical or confrontational the conditions are on it; rather humanity needs to participate to our full extent in the earthly life whether earthly suffering or earthly flourishing. According to De Gruchy we are not on earth in order to get some distant heaven one day. We are created to represent Christ on earth, to use our God given gifts to the fullest in order to change/transform the situation that hinders our human potential to promote human life and to be bearers of hope.

De Gruchy draws greatly from Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* which was discussed in depth in this chapter. De Gruchy explained that *Theology of Hope* became the most inspirational resource for hopeful discourse for scholars, theologians and church leaders in South Africa as it was for many others around the globe as it protested against the dehumanizing powers which were causes of deep suffering and despair" (De Gruchy, 2013:194). De Gruchy explained that when he first read *Theology of Hope* in the late 1960s, he represented the South African Council of Churches (SACC), who spearheaded the church's struggle against apartheid. De Gruchy goes on by explaining that the situation was becoming more ominous by the day and the churches were divided, both internally and in relation to other churches. "The lines of division were not just those delineated by race, political association or denomination but it also came about because of a different understanding of the gospel and of salvation" (De Gruchy, 2013:195). The problem was eschatological. Was the gospel primarily about personal salvation from sin to secure a place in a heaven beyond this world; or was the gospel about struggling against the oppression and injustices of apartheid, so that God's will as it is in heaven should become a reality on earth even if it is still not fully realized in the politics of our time and space?

According to De Gruchy it was Moltmann who helped the South African discourse to see that those who hoped in Christ could no longer put up with the reality as it was but had to begin to suffer under it to contradict it. De Gruchy explains that for Moltmann "hope is true realism, because it takes seriously the possibilities with which all reality is wrought. Hope has to do with affirming our humanity and discerning new possibilities for the future within the realities of the life here and now. This hope, for Moltmann makes the church a constant disturbance in human society" (De Gruchy, 2013:195).

From this perspective Paul's words that we are saved by hope took on a new radically fresh meaning without which we would have collapsed into self-defeating despair. De Gruchy compliments Moltmann as Moltmann helped him to understand eschatology as a message of hope in God's faithful, redemptive action in history instead of something that is focused on life after death and the salvation of the soul in a life after this. It was not a social or political analysis that gives hope, but the conviction that God's promise of liberation, justice and peace could become a penultimate reality now in anticipation of its fulfilment when all things would be brought to completion. The faithful promise of God's justice, God's Kingdom on earth as in heaven, was the foundation of our hope, not evolutionary optimism. What matters is not beyond this world but this world, how it was created and is perceived (De Gruchy, 2013:197).

What is beyond this world is meant, in the gospel, to be there for this world, not in the anthropocentric sense of liberal, mystic, pietistic, ethical theology but in the biblical sense of the creation and the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That is what an incarnate hope means. Hope incarnate and incarnated basically finds life in the incarnation and life of Jesus Christ, which means that if we are to live like he did and follow his example in the way he served society we will make visible the potential that resides in humanity to do and be good. In that moment of imitating Christ and living a life that portrays a hunger for positive change and a new creation of love, peace and justice there is where hope for the present is born. Thus, in order to begin a new creation in which these characteristics of God's kingdom are visible we need to live a life which is navigated by the Christian hope which is informed by Jesus Christ.

3.5.2 Moltmann on incarnate hope

In the beginning of this study I explained the purpose of exploring Moltmann's study on hope. In the discipline of theology Moltmann is known as the father of a "theology of hope", thus the purpose of this study of Moltmann in the present paper was to establish if Moltmann can help us to understand hope, especially a hope that is incarnated, a hope that is informed by the life and work of Jesus Christ, and in this way also an embodied hope that links hope to formation and transformation. The primary purpose of this study is to move away from contemporary interpretations of hope that cause hope to be something in the far distance, something that is impossible to accomplish in our present day and age, something that is just a temporary remedy for despair and suffering.

What this study seeks to argue is that a materialized hope is one that is felt and experienced in our day to day life by following the example of Christ's life and ethics. Hope is to become something that should be done and not just something portrayed as mere expectation, anticipation or vision which resides in the far future. The study of Moltmann's theology and ethics of hope has led us to ask the questions: what relevance does his interpretations of hope have for a better understanding of a hope incarnate? Does Moltmann, in any way, help us to get a better understanding of what an incarnate hope is and how it works? Is Moltmann's theology of Christian hope useful for us to move away from these deficient interpretations and understandings of hope? Throughout the Moltmann discussion it was evident that he shares in the idea of hope made visible in Christ. Even though Moltmann focuses more on the resurrection and coming of Christ as main themes of hope he does invest some time in exploring

the ethical and social impact of Jesus in society. Moltmann argues in his *Ethics of Hope* that “hope is lived when it comes alive, when we go outside of ourselves and, in joy and pain take part in the lives of others” (Moltmann, 2010:50). This is precisely what this study wants to argue, that a personal change in the way we live not for ourselves but for others can positively contribute to a transformation in societal life.

For Moltmann this basically means doing what Christ wants us to do, living like Christ wants us to live and ultimately be obedient to Christ in everything we do. That is basically how we change the way humanity understands its purpose and it is in this way of living that potential and possibilities for human flourishing lie. In order to come to terms with an incarnate hope, three aspects need to be considered and maintained. First, we need to embody and maintain, a lifestyle that resembles a hope that is informed by the “ways of Jesus Christ”. One needs to be obedient to God and his laws. Second, it is important to stress that one must follow the example of Christ to the extent that it has an impact to everybody in their everyday lives. Third, one must be genuine in imitating Christ for the sole purpose of bringing hope and not for personal gain but the common good of everyone. Fourth, one must be community-orientated and willing to serve and finally one must be consistent in these practices of obedience and the imitation of Christ.

Consistency in doing well is the one thing that distinguishes Jesus from any other human being as he was always doing what was good and right even if it would mean that he would suffer a brutal death on the cross; he never stopped bringing the kingdom of God to humanity. So, does Moltmann help us in any way to understand an incarnate hope? Let us look at the points Moltmann makes in order to answer this question.

3.5.3 Obedience

Earlier in this study it is argued that disobedience is the force that threatens the hopeful on their way. So, the temptation, argues Moltmann, consists not so much in the “titanic desire to be like God but in our weakness, timidity, weariness, not wanting to be what God requires of us” (Moltmann, 1967:22). Thus, for Moltmann, obedience to Christ is central to a life of hope, for obedience enables us to live a life that is prescribed by God, to not kill but to love, to thirst for justice as opposed to injustice, to share instead of exploit, and to forgive and reconcile. If we live a life of obedience to God we become what he wants us to be and our lives become a ray of hope to the hopeless as our lives reflect and resemble what is good in this world, and the possibilities that come with it are endless, possibilities for a new creation as was promised.

Secondly, for Moltmann in all our acts of obedience we are sowing hope. Just as the goal of promise is towards fulfilment, as the goal of faith is towards obedience and sight, and as the goal of hope is towards the life that is promised and finally attained, so the goal of the resurrection of Christ is towards life in the Spirit and towards the eternal life that is the consummation of all things. Again, Moltmann refers the faith we ought to have in the promise of the resurrected Christ who will return on the final day to fulfil his promise. Moltmann stirs our faith at this point to be obedient as it will be rewarded not just in the future fulfilment of God's promise but also in our present reality as obedience holds the potential to bring hope where hope seems like nothing more than just a fantasy.

Finally, Moltmann the incarnation provides us with insight into God's being and how we are to participate in it. This means, that in order to follow this path set out for humanity by God, we need to devote ourselves to ultimate obedience to his word. We are to follow his example and adopt his way of living and thinking. We need to become servants of one another and not dominant forces that destroy human trust and relationships. This third remark by Moltmann teaches us that in order for us to understand Christ and what Christ wants with humanity and the world, we need to actively participate in practices that Christ holds dear to himself, that means we need to be obedient to God's word so that we might experience the effects thereof, effects which are marked by transformation of humanity, social conditions, justice systems and community. Only in faithful obedience can we experience the life-changing potential the love of Christ possesses.

When we look at obedience from these perspectives it becomes clear that Moltmann had hope in mind when he discussed obedience. Moltmann urges humanity to be obedient so that they may enjoy the reward of life and human flourishing. It should also be mentioned that Moltmann draws much of his insight on obedience from Paul's letters, specifically when Paul is writing to communities that are confronted with social issues that threaten their life and their faith. Paul's message to these communities, that are facing severe hopelessness, is to be obedient to Christ and not stop doing good, because from doing good comes the reward of positive change in the personal life of the individual and even in society as a collective community.

3.5.4 Imitating Christ

With obedience comes the following of Christ's example. One aspect of being obedient is to follow the example of Christ or to imitate Christ. First of all, Moltmann (2010:45-69) explains that a Christian ethic or Christian hope that ought to follow the example of Christ must do so

with the intent to serve life, importantly the life of oneself. “One should love one’s neighbour as oneself”, and that presupposes a healthy self-love. The person who despises themselves will not be able to love their neighbour either. Someone who is uncertain in himself will make his neighbour uncertain too. This is very profound because imitating Christ starts with Christ’s love, a love for oneself but also a sacrificial love of absolute devotion to Christ. When we love Christ and ourselves as created in the image of God for God’s purpose it becomes impossible not to live a life that conforms to Christ’s character and being.

Moltmann also explains that in order to enjoy God, we need to first understand God’s will for humanity and experience God through following Christ’s example to love, serve each other and to promote human life. First of all, what is meant by enjoying God? For Moltmann this means enjoying a life in community that is characterized by characteristics of God. To love one another, to serve one another and not to destroy one another, to accept and include rather than to reject and exclude. This is how we enjoy God and how we enjoy life. For this reason, Moltmann stresses the importance of imitating Christ because the outcome is absolute joy and hope.

3.5.5 Authentic discipleship

In order to really ensure that our imitation of Christ is fruitful we must be genuine in our imitation of Christ. In his ethics of hope Moltmann (2010) stresses the importance of authenticity in the work we do for God. He explains that if we are not authentic in our service to God, we will suffocate Christian hope and not bring it to its full potential. This means that if we are not authentic in what we do, our motives for doing good will not serve the purpose of God’s work and we will either work against God’s will, which will not be fruitful, or we would do it with the agenda of manipulating God’s message to justify the wrongs we do. Thus, in imitating Christ we really need to be genuine and real so that the outcome may be to serve God and to bring hope to humanity and not to use the work of God to destroy hope. Authentication of our service and imitation of Christ stands in strong relation to what Moltmann calls imitating Christ as a “community-orientated” task.

This means that if we do not imitate Christ to serve the community it will do us no good; it will not bring any hope to society and it will not serve the purpose of an incarnated hope. A hope that forms part of Christ’s being cannot be individualistic or for one’s self alone. To imitate Christ means to do what he did, and Christ was a public person, he served the community, and devoted his entire life to the well-being of humanity and to bring down unjust and oppressive

structures and systems. Thus, if we are to imitate Christ, we must be sure that it is in service of society and for the benefit of society and humanity as a whole and not for personal gain, as from individualism comes betrayal. Thus, for Moltmann our intentions should always be to serve and to do so in a way that honours God and that resembles the character of Christ.

3.5.6 Consistency

Finally, if we are to be successful in our task of serving and imitating Christ we need to do so completely; we need to be consistent. If we talk about the character of Christ, one characteristic that is unavoidable is his consistency in doing good. From the incarnation to his crucifixion Christ was consistent in his task on earth. For many interpreters of the New Testament, including Moltmann, Christ's success in his work and message on earth came as a result of his consistency in what he was doing. Christ never grew tired of what he was doing; he found joy in doing good. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul urges them to not grow weary in doing good (Galatians 6:9) as they will be rewarded in not growing weary. This, also, is a call from Paul for consistency in doing what Christ wants us to do. I believe this is one of the key elements of hope incarnate, to embody Christ's character and follow his example but not to stop as it is only in constantly doing good that hope is felt and realized.

This brings us to the answer to our question of Moltmann's relevance to this study. It should, first of all be said, that throughout Moltmann's theology he focused more on the historical element of promise and future element of hope. His arguments are basically aimed at hope in the past and how it will look in the future, but he did not spend as much time on how hope functions in the present. Moltmann himself admits that he neglected the present in his eschatology and theology of hope (Moltmann, 1967:15-36). I believe that the reason for this is that maybe it has not been the purpose of his work to specifically look at how hope functions in the present but to see how it functions in the promise of the future. If this was the case it would have brought me to conclude that it does not really help us much in exploring an incarnate hope. I would say this for the simple reason that a hope incarnate primarily focuses on the present and how to bring about change in the present so that humanity can experience hope in their everyday lives.

However, Moltmann's focus on the past, future and promise does not mean he ignores the importance of Christian hope in the present. The purpose of Moltmann's work was not aimed at the topic of the present but to make us understand eschatology and Christology in relation to the promise of fulfilment. This brings me to argue that Moltmann did focus on the present when

he explored the future in terms of the New Testament themes of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, salvation and fulfilment as he made specific reference to Jesus' social impact and how his life was an ethical example to be followed if we want to survive the dangers of the earth. Moltmann's Christology is very sensitive to the social conditions which confronted the communities in Jesus' time. Therefore, Moltmann's Christology discusses and explores the way of Jesus, not just as an eschatological person, a person of the future promise fulfilment and the not yet, but also as a social person, a person of the already.

Moltmann not only teaches about the eschatological character of hope but also introduces us to the Christological character of hope in terms of Christ's incarnation and our participation in the life of Christ. Moltmann went on to unfold Christ's message and life in an ethical framework for us as a guide to life and to save the earth and humanity from total damnation and destruction. I believe Moltmann has helped us to understand our responsibility as the church to start engaging in this renewed understanding of hope as it reminds us, as a vocational church, of our responsibility as representatives of God on earth to realize hope in the way we live inside the church's life of koinonia and outside the church as servants of the world in our diaconal calling and responsibility to humanity.

In these actions of the church portraying the imitation of Christ, the church becomes a living example of what hope is and how humanity is to respond to such hope. The church, as a matter of fact, needs to become the medium of influence in society just like Jesus did. For Moltmann this is the real and true church, a church that brings hope in the present and not just preaching about the coming of hope and the fulfilment of promise.

Moltmann's theology developed a strong sense of discipleship in the following of God in today's world, and he calls the church to return to following Jesus Christ in the world today as it is our responsibility to the world to be disciples of God and his mission. Moltmann draws much of his thoughts on radical discipleship from Bonhoeffer. As a community of faith, it becomes our responsibility to partake in radical discipleship. At this point it can be said that Moltmann helps us very much and it becomes evident in his constant emphasis and reflection on Phil 2:5. The message of Paul to the church in Philippi is consistent with the main study of this paper, which is that we need to embody the mindset and humility of Christ. We must conform to his character and follow his example as it is in doing good that humanity realizes the good it possesses and begins to strive to promote that good. Hope incarnate is parallel to what Paul is trying to explain, that in the midst of troubling events and danger we need not to

give up but be consistent in doing good as it is in doing the right thing that we save humanity from damnation and it is here where hope is born.

I observed in this study that Moltmann's theology and work are a result of traditional Lutheran thinking and theology as he was greatly influenced by such thinking with special reference to Hegel. One interesting characteristic of the tradition is that Lutherans do not find the idea of "Imitatio Christi" very appealing and to some extent critiqued it very sharply. They argue that in imitating Christ humanity attempts to be like Christ which we can never be. However, Moltmann's theology seems to move sharply towards this direction, where humanity needs to follow the example of and conform to Christ's ways especially when Moltmann urges people to adopt the mindset of Christ (Phil. 2:5). This would cause me to think that Moltmann challenged this traditional thinking, which influenced him, by emphasising the importance of following the ethical and moral example of Jesus as this is the only way that we can really break into the world and make a difference. Once again it should also be important to emphasise that imitating Christ in this regard is not an active attempt to become like Christ but a passive one which tries to conform to Christ's ways of doing things, by embodying his ethics, morals and views of life.

I want to end this chapter with a look at South Africa and how an incarnate hope fits into the reality of South Africa's history but also its present and future. After the dark era of Apartheid, which has been characterised by trauma, countless innocent deaths, suffering, oppression, injustice and terror, a new day dawned upon South Africans. In 1994 the first democratic election took place and a black president was elected. This change in governance was the exact change, which many people have felt at that time, of their fate.

People experienced liberation, freedom from bondage, people finally felt safe as new policies and governmental structures were put in place, to protect them and not to harm them. Policies that would promote the dignity and rights of people and that would promote justice and peace were implemented. Reconciliation was at work and the attempt to restore broken relationships was active. For the people who lived in that era, that time of transition, it was the beginning of a new day one in which the good would outweigh the bad and where the good would prevail over evil. This era of transition marked the very birth of hope for people in that time.

The essence hereof is that when people see the potential that the good has and the possibilities that the good brings, then people see the potential of hope that can transform the threatening realities that confront us on a daily basis. When we embody a life of doing good as Christ did,

we experience and realize what good can come from humanity. And then hope, along with faith and love, becomes not only the coming reign of God but the existing reign of God. Hope Incarnate then inspires transformative hope, a hope that transforms the social, political and economic quality, and stands for all of humanity.

Daniel Louw, a renowned South African theologian with great interest in the fields of pastoral care, practical theology and pastoral counseling, drew great insight from Moltmann's *Theology of hope* and even Ernst Bloch's *Principle of Hope*. Louw's major publications such as *Cura Vitae: Illness and Healing of Life in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (2007) and "Cura anumarum as hope care: Towards a theology of the resurrection within the human quest for meaning and hope" (2014) rest on the idea that ultimate healing and survival depends on existential categories such as vision, hope, imaginative capacities and the response to challenge threatening crisis'. This idea is greatly emphasized by Moltmann throughout is *Theology of Hope* and *The Coming of God*. Scholars such as Louw, De Gruchy and Boesak drew much from Moltmann to explain hope in their respective disciplines. Russel Botman, also a South African theologian, did not draw explicitly from Moltmann but build his theology of hope on the same basis, and as Moltmann he too was influenced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as well as some liberation theologians.

Botman, unlike Moltmann, did not, however, outline a systematic framework of what a theology of hope is. But he did reflect on hope in articles and implemented it in social and religious institutions. In the next chapter we will specifically discuss and explore how Botman understood and practiced hope and why we can also speak of his thought as marked by the notion of hope incarnate.

Chapter 4: Russel Botman - Transformative hope inspired by incarnational hope

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore Russel Botman's theology and thoughts on the topic of transformative hope. The first part of the chapter will explore some biographical information about Botman. This biographical information will specifically look at his primary beliefs, personal faith and what influenced his beliefs and convictions. This biographical and background information will also explore the contexts in which his theology started and how it developed. This exploration is essential as his theology is influenced by context and it is contextually reasoned.

Therefore, to outline a proper and efficient framework of his thoughts and theology and the exploration thereof, some biographical information is required. During this introductory section of his biographical and background information, extracts of what transformative hope means will surface as this contextual information shaped his thoughts on hope. The chapter will then continue to unfold his thoughts on transformative hope by specifically looking at how Botman's eschatology, Christology and ethics contribute to the shaping of his theology on transformative hope, which then will lead us to how this transformative hope can shape the notion of an incarnate hope which this study wants to propose.

4.2 Biographical information and background of his theology

Russel Botman was a South African Reformed theologian, minister, leader, well-known ecumenical figure, and South African public intellectual. Botman had a very clear vision on how the present links with the future reign of God through discipleship. Botman, one can say, engaged more directly with societal issues. Moltmann, despite his engagement also as a political activist, made rigorous announcements of how society must be in the future, but he has never taken any kind of position of institutional societal responsibility to see how his insights could be translated into a particular form of social practice. By becoming Rector of Stellenbosch University Botman did become accountable for what his vision was and how he translated it into forms of social practice. Yet both Moltmann and Botman was theologians whose work focused on praxis, albeit in different ways.

A further obvious difference between Moltmann and Botman is that Moltmann wrote his *Theology of Hope* in the sixties in Germany, a very different situation from Botman who was

writing in the period of apartheid, the transition to democracy in South Africa, and its aftermath. Since Moltmann and Botman have views on theology and hope which are shaped by their differing contexts, some might question whether considering them together would bear much fruit.

However, my experience with their theologies differs strongly from what some may consider an unfruitful conversation partnership or, perhaps, that it pushes the boundaries by trying to make their theologies fit or find correlation. But a close study of these two scholars demonstrates in my view that Moltmann and Botman shared much the same convictions about hope, especially the idea of an embodied hope, a hope that instructs us on how to live, a hope that serves the common good of humanity, a hope that is actively at work in the present realities we are confronted with on a daily basis. I specifically realized this when I personally asked Moltmann the question of the relationship between hope and transformation. In March 2017 Moltmann paid a brief visit to Stellenbosch University where theology students were privileged to participate in an informal question and answer session with Moltmann. Students were given the opportunity to ask Moltmann questions based on his theology and convictions.

With my deep interest in the topic of hope I asked Moltmann how specifically we link hope with transformation and agency, so that it may become active in changing the way humanity lives. As the father of the “Theology of hope”, Moltmann gave me a very simple yet insightful and significant answer that made me see connections to the way Russel Botman wrote and spoke about a hope. Moltmann explained to me that hope stirs one’s imagination and that our imagination helps us to discern possibilities and to dream. Through these dreams and possibilities agencies for transformation and positive change are established.

Botman too shared this insight, and it can even be seen as the foundational insight for his thinking. His “dream” was kept alive by his imagination of a better tomorrow. Something hereof culminated in the Hope Project at Stellenbosch University, and the way in which Botman became widely known for his commitment to hopeful transformation. This relationship between hope, dreaming, imagination, discernment and transformation became the features of Botman’s life as a leader and activist for hope. In her doctoral dissertation, Nadia Marais explains that Botman outlined the importance of hope and the implications of it in academic, social, ecclesial and institutional settings “to promote a hope that transforms the living conditions of our world in such a way that humanity may flourish” (Marais, 2015:202).

Botman's contribution to the *Kuyper Center Review* (volume 5, 2015), with the title "Dread, Hope and the African dream: An ecumenical collage", provides this chapter with a very significant platform to build on. In his discussion on the topics of dread and hope Botman argues that there is no question of the centrality of hope in the Christian gospel. Botman (2015:8) explains that hope is the middle element of the triad of Christian life that Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:13; "Meanwhile those three remain faith, hope and love", a triangle with equal corners that energizes Christianity. According to Botman (2015:9) biblical scholars tell us that the understanding of the social world of Paul is crucial for the interpretation of his use of the triad. This triad represents a collective, public understanding of Christianity and not a personal or individual one. This also means that Paul is writing not about one's personal love, individualistic faith or private hope. Instead, he is speaking of collective and publicly demonstrated faith, hope and love. Things that not only describe Christianity in its entirety but also provides the guidelines given by Christ to teach us how to live as Christians.

However, Paul also moves away from the structure of equality in the triad: "The greatest of these is love". The answer to why Paul places emphasis on love, explains Botman can only be found in the rereading of the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Paul covers serious communal concerns; the abuse of the feast of love, the marginalization of the poor, issues of sex and marriage, legal disputes among community members and conflict as a result of a holier-than-thou nature. In all these questions Paul is distressed in the issue of division, conflict and class separation in the congregation. The full story that we find in 1 Corinthians 1-12 is that of loveless-ness, enmity, marginalization and hatred. It is in this context that Paul states "That the greatest of these is love" (Botman, 2015:10).

However, we have been witnesses to this critical choice in ministry and public life of different times in history. At certain times the world needs a Martin Luther or John Calvin who proclaims the greatest of the three is faith, in the fact that these men emphasize the idea of faith alone. Botman on the other hand, within the context of dread we need to shuffle around the triad once more; we now need hope. We need to dream of hope that we need to confess and act on. This means that hope becomes something that we live out, something that becomes a part of our Christian conduct. Botman explains this hope in terms of the Greek word *oikos* which means "community" or "household". Thus, a space for living relationships and communal life. The *oikos* is a God-given space for living. It enables relationships, evokes neighborliness and living for the other and to move away from mere greed and self-interest" (Botman, 2015:13). This Christian hope allows us, not forces us, to hope, to dream and indeed to live as if the status quo

is not (the way things need to be). Botman cautions us to understand that neither one of the three themes are more important than the other. The meaning of the greatest that Paul mentions here must be understood as that which is of the greatest importance to the people given their life situation and what their spiritual need is. The same applies to the themes of faith and hope.

Ultimately, hope for Botman ought to move from significance to relevance. The word relevance will have a prominent feature in this thesis. Therefore, to prevent any misunderstanding by the way it is used in this study, it should be said that relevance in this regard refers not to the Gospel being compromised to fit the world or the church adopting the ways of the world to fit in. Rather, it refers to the Gospel and the church being effective in its vocational purpose on earth, really consoling those in suffering, rising against injustices and poor governance, promoting an inclusive way of living that will support human dignity and the common good of all human life.

Dirkie Smit, promoter and colleague of Botman, explains that even though Botman's understanding of hope took shape in his engagement with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, he still brought this understanding to life in his local context. Hope became a central motif in his life and work after *Hope for the World* was published, a study at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta in which he participated. He used the theme of hope for his inaugural lecture as professor in Stellenbosch. In addition, he taught master's students on social ethics to imagine social hope. He furthermore spoke of hope for the city when he addressed church leaders on turning the tide in Cape Town, in the midst of gangsterism, illegal arms dealings and drug dealings. And as a university administrator he developed his pedagogy of hope and initiated the Hope Project which was his pledge to transformation and hope. Transformation in the sense that, things are not to remain the same, the poverty, inequality, injustices etc, needs to be addressed. With this attempt to bring transformation, action is needed. Something must be done. Action can either bring hope or it can bring despair. For Botman the Hope Project is action that seeks to bring hope in despairing situations.

For Botman the logic of his transformative hope meant that it was “a this-worldly hope over against all forms of other-worldliness; an empowering hope over and against all forms of despair; and a modest and self-critical hope over against all forms of false hope” (Smit, 2015:622). At this point it should be emphasized that this chapter aims to indicate that Botman's understanding of hope is not merely a restatement of Moltmann's work of hope. Both, Moltmann and Botman were significantly influenced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer but Botman

was also influenced in a very specific way by liberation theology and movements in Latin America which inspired him to broaden his theology from theory to praxis.

Robert Vosloo, Professor of Systematic Theology at Stellenbosch University, writes in Botman's portfolio (*introducing the Botman collection in the Beyers Naudé archive in Stellenbosch*) that Botman played a leading role in Reformed and ecumenical circles as well as in "higher education, enacting in the process a visionary commitment to a future marked by human dignity, reconciliation, justice and hope" (Vosloo, 2016:3). In the first Russel Botman memorial lecture, delivered on 19 October 2015, Smit spoke about the theological logic of Russel Botman's commitment to transformation, especially with the focus on the coming generation. Botman's doctoral dissertation also starts its argument with the question of how the coming generation is to live. One of Botman's deepest wishes and dreams was that the son of the farmer and daughter of the farmworker have the same opportunities and chances for education and recognition. This also gives us insight into his lifelong commitment to promote equality and human dignity. It was at a young age that Botman realised the importance of education "as the medium that empowers, equips and ensures upward mobility" (Thomas, 2017:3).

Botman also learned at a young age what it means to take care and love people apart from himself as he was the eldest child and was given the responsibility by his parents to take care of his siblings while his parents were at work. It was also in these events where his sensitivity for feminism and the recognition of the significant role of women in our lives was born. Botman realised that our pastoral responsibility is very important in our relationship with people that are not like us or familiar with our ways. For him it was important to know that sensitivity towards other people's trials and despairs bring about consolation and healing. And these are important for the health and unity of communal life. Botman was especially influenced by the ideas of black consciousness, Black Theology and liberation theology. He was also inspired by the "non-violent direct-action struggle" of Martin Luther King Jr's civil rights movement. He often listened to Dr. King's "I have a dream" speech on an LP record. He even read King's "Why We Can't Wait" (Thomas, 2017:22).

On 18 August 1976, Allan Boesak appeared on the scene after returning from the Netherlands where he had finished his studies. Boesak emphasized the role of the church in the Black struggle. Botman along with Leonard Appies became Boesak's support system as they were the leaders in spreading Boesak's thoughts at the university. At this point, it became clear to

Botman that the struggle against Apartheid was a struggle to be addressed by the church. In 1976, Botman saw the church as a meeting place for revolutionaries. This brought to life the idea that stayed with him until his death. The church does not stand aloof from the struggles of society. The church needs to be the agent that supports society in combating unjust and oppressive ideologies. The church should be the bearers and agents of hope.

As upcoming leaders of their time, Botman and Boesak took a strong position against Apartheid as a system of ultimate destruction and division. For them “Apartheid being a system of oppression and injustice, is sinful and antithetical to the Gospel because it is based on the fundamental irreconcilability of human beings, thus rendering ineffective the reconciling and uniting power of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Thomas, 2017:32). In his opposition against Apartheid as a strong politically fueled system, Botman constantly turned to the work of Abraham Kuyper, the Dutch politician and neo-Calvinist theologian. Botman was struck by Kuyper’s argument that the Dutch government is the result of sin, and that the government entrusted to themselves the power and authority that would paint the picture that government is superior to Christ. This, Botman explains, calls for the redemption of the power and name of God Almighty. In this, Botman learned that sin was the cause of separation amongst God’s people. It causes humanity to fall apart.

Thomas argues that it could be possible that it was at this point that Botman saw the solution to South Africa’s problem of Apartheid. “For him the solution would be to promote the righteousness of God and to call upon the church to act accordingly to live a life that imitates Jesus Christ to educate and to minister to people and to become a prophetic witness to God’s majesty and grace” (Thomas, 2017:32). Botman was also influenced by Kuyper’s explanation of the Calvinist confession of the sovereignty of God. Kuyper argues that it does not matter what authority people give themselves; one never possesses power over another. Only God gives one authority, and not to oppress another but to save another. Kuyper stresses that the way the world is managed is no longer according to the will of God but that of the state, which uses their forces to oppress, corrupt and exploit.

Another important influential part of Botman’s life was the years that gave birth to the Belhar Confession. Since 1976 the fight against Apartheid intensified. This was also the year that Botman concluded his studies at the University of the Western Cape. The Belhar confession was the one tool that Botman used to remind himself of what God called believers to do and be in these times of terror and oppression. The Belhar confession called the church to unity;

reconciliation between people within the church and society and to the justice of God. When he delivered his trial sermon on the 27th of September 1976 in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church congregation of Bishop Lavis he based his sermon on these pillars. His sermon came from Phil. 2:5: “In your relationship with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus”. To follow Jesus as the creator and sustainer of his Kingdom was fundamental to Botman’s life as minister and public figure. This sermon would bring to light what Botman got from the Belhar confession. When the church and seek to adopt the mindset of Christ, what we confess in the Belhar confession comes to life.

One of the admirable things about Botman is the fact that he was not comfortable with the idea that the DRMC still benefited from the DRC as it gives some kind of indication that the inequalities at hand were ignored between these bodies because you benefit financially from the situation. As a result, he wrote his name in the minority, when the decision came to synod that the DRMC should withdraw from the pension funds of the DRC (Botha, 2017:41). It was especially a bold move to show that his priorities reside with justice and equality and not primarily with money because he knew a life that is based on anything other than the gospel will fall into a life apart from God, which Moltmann calls a joyless life, in his book *Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1977).

A question that Botman then asked was, “What should it look like to follow Belhar?” He then returned to Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s idea of discipleship and applied his focus on the responsible ethics to transformation in our context. Botman states in this regard: “God’s mission as the heart of the church came without bitterness but rather with the positive expectation of a repaired church and society” (Botha, 2017:52). This made a deep, hope-giving impression on people listening to him. Botman’s intentions were clear; he wanted to work towards one church; he wanted to establish inclusive communities that embrace diversity in which reconciliation and justice prevail over hatred, bitterness and violence (Botha, 2017:52). Botman’s primary convictions were that:

- “Members of the Reformed Church confess with conviction that every reality belongs to God. It forms the basis of our involvement, callings and testimony in all facets of society. Don’t back down from challenges involved in this”.
- “The Lord calls us to seriously embody unity. As church, we seriously owe it to the world, so they can believe Jesus is the Lord”.

- “We must provide hospitality to the foreigners, as the gospel of love asks, as people we must, especially when people use differentness of the other to push them away, out of conversation”.
- “The Word of God must be our final guiding principle. We stand and fall by it. We take the context seriously, but the Word of Jesus motivates us to testify bravely” (Botha, 2017:54).

He broadens this social transformation by including the voices of women in this embodied unity of the church. He believed that only a true and equal partnership between women and men can constitute the reality of one church. If anyone is excluded, based on race, gender, nationality etc. we fail in our attempts to work towards unity. He became known, especially in ecumenical circles, as a critical yet lenient and warm thinker, someone who built bridges by which different people could meet and negotiate, but he was also known for his commitment to include others in the search for a clearer perspective and a more just tomorrow (Thomas, 2017: 62).

Smit (2017:74) explains that Botman dreamed of changing the mind of the coming generation to embody this kind of life of sincerity and to imagine a life where we could really see all flourish. Botman’s early discoveries regarding hope that Botman made in the course of his graduate work came to full expression later in life as he endeavoured to turn these ideas into a lived reality.

Botman’s outspoken beliefs that transformation is possible, informative and necessary were driven by his passion for moral responsibility, justice and human dignity. On the one hand, he knew personal deprivation, sadness, and hardship intimately. On the other hand, his career was one of perseverance, excellence, and success in many ways.

This brings us to the questions of this chapter: How are themes like Christology, the incarnation and discipleship related to social, political and economic transformation? What are the systematic connections? In answering these questions, we need to be clear that different relationships need to be taken into consideration. The relationship between hope and faith is one dynamic aspect and the relationship between hope and transformation or hope and discipleship another. When exploring the relationship between faith and hope we can ask the question: what is a faithless hope? Or what is hope without faith? By asking these questions we very quickly discover what the function of faith is in the process of hope and transformation.

When we explore the relationship of hope with discipleship and transformation we must also highlight the relationship between hope and love, as well as hope and obedience, as these relationships manifest one's relationship with God, and one's relationship with God will determine one's commitment to transforming the world to its created and redeemed order. These relationships always result in a self-involving and other-involving hope which means that hope is never in isolation, it influences personal life and grows to become communal in its task, calling other people to engage in this hope-giving task. Thus, such hope-giving transformation teaches individuals and communities to love, and this love constitutes a new relationship. This then brings us to our final question: how do these relationships help us to understand a hope that is incarnate, a hope that is identical to Christ's ways and active in its attempt to transform the realities of our world today?

In order to answer the above-mentioned question, we need to engage with Botman's resources and explore some specific themes. Botman's master's thesis *Jesus, Nog God, Nog Mens? 'n Kritiese Evaluering van die Evolusionere Verbondsmagtiheid van H. Berkhof*" and his doctoral dissertation *Discipleship as Transformation? Towards a Theology of Transformation* provides us with insight to these questions; it provides a primary tool in which one can understand Botman's theology, his beliefs and his main convictions as the theology that he explores and develops in these papers became the foundation on which the rest of his theology developed and was built.

First this chapter will explore the eschatological implications of Botman's theology to the relationships between incarnation and transformation; transformation and discipleship; discipleship and hope and hope and love. These relationships will provide us with a clear framework of how Botman thought about hope functions in the transformation of human life, human thought and social transformation. Second, this chapter will explore Botman's Christological presuppositions to determine the relevance of his work to a hope incarnate. Finally, this chapter will explore Botman's ethical thoughts on hope as medium of transformation especially in our daily confrontation with social issues. This chapter will follow a similar structural outline as the Moltmann chapter, with an eschatological section (part 1), a Christological section (part 2) and an ethical section (part 3). This section will follow a chronological structure as Botman's Christology precedes his ethics as his ethics are born from his Christology.

The aim of this chapter is not to separate Botman's Christology and his ethics as it very intertwined and connected with each other and separating these two themes may result in a deficient understanding of his theology. Thus, this chapter will not separate these themes as they inform and are informed by one another; it will only attempt to explore these themes separately as it will help us to establish the chronology of how Botman's theology developed.

Our primary conversation partner of this chapter will be Russel Botman, but this chapter will also invite secondary material as it may help us to get a clearer picture of what Botman is trying to communicate and achieve. This chapter will commence with Botman's essay, "Hope as the Coming Reign of God", a chapter from a collective reader by Walter Brueggemann, *Hope for The World: Mission in a Global Context*, published in 2001; an essay in which his eschatological vision develops. The other two sections will engage with different material, primarily by Botman and also some secondary sources, mainly some texts by Dirkie Smit.

Part 1: Hope as the coming reign of God

4.1.1 Reign of God

Botman engages with the topic of hope already in his master's thesis and doctorate dissertation, which we will return to later in this chapter. However, his essay "Hope as the Coming Reign of God", poses some important questions to build our argument on. Botman asks the questions: how shall we talk of hope in the twenty-first century? What does it imply, and how are we to theologically communicate it in today's world? In answering this question Botman examines and explores the concept of hope as a category of grace and not of nature. He begins his theological engagement with the theme of hope by exploring the notion of the "reign of God", which contains the dual dimension of the "already" and the "not yet" (Botman, 2001:69).

For Botman the world is familiar with despair, whether it is family, nationally or regionally oriented. But he explains that at this point in time, the world with all its religions are confronted with an unequalled crisis namely global despair, which is not unfamiliar to humanity. What Botman means by this global despair is the horrifying wars, nuclear threats, global warming, life threatening poverty and the exploitation of earthly and human resources.

This current crisis of hope is, moreover, taking place when the world is experiencing its highest, political, economic, technological, and cultural moment in history. As each one of these

categories of the global graph is pointing upwards, the graph of hope has seemed to move downwards in its social, economic and political stratifications. However, Botman “cautions us not to seek for hope on the basis of despair as it is not a struggle to make sense of the decay, the depression and the despair that will assist us in an adequate understanding of hope for the twenty-first century” (Botman, 2001:70). For us to adequately understand hope in this era we need to engage in a proper analysis of the context, in its diversity, and come to an in-depth understanding of the nature of despair. Botman explains that nothing in us, nothing of us, or of this world, not its suffering and despair can bring an adequate understanding of the real depth of Christian hope. To confess hope in action, explains Botman, requires a theological grounding to become meaningful today and the notion of the reign of God has often been used to assist theology in this regard. The reign of God gives us hope as a gift of grace.

4.1.2 Gift of Grace

For Botman, “standing at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the cries for hope rise above the global horizon. Economic globalization represents unprecedented wealth in small pockets of the world and unprecedented despair unto the ends of the earth” (Botman, 2001:73). Botman explains that it is only real hope that will save the world and its people, which is victim to this imbalance and unequal phenomena. And this real hope must be rooted in eschatology and must be received as a gift of grace. Botman recalls Jesus’ response to the people in despair and people longing for hope in societies where hope seems to be nothing more than an illusion. Jesus’ response to these people was manifested in the announcement of the “coming reign of God”. This claim to hope represents for the people of early Palestine and for us today, the most critical break with our despair. We can therefore look at the kind of world we live in without surrendering to the despair of false hope we ourselves have constructed.

The twenty-first century calls Christians to re-imagine Christian hope by basing it anew on the active presence of God in the world today. This eschatological hope, according to Botman, does not find its origin only with Jesus but is foundational to the whole revelation of the triune God. The Bible reveals that God acting in and throughout history. “Such hope must be expressed as a category of grace and not of nature. Its existence is a gift of grace; its revelation, a mystery of grace; and its historical appearance, a manifestation of grace” (Botman, 2001:73). This is the hope that Christians are called to confess.

This hope differs radically from the hope understood by Marxism, modern capitalism and the Enlightenment. For Botman hope represents the eschatological-historical character of Christian

faith. This means that “faith is being historically sure of the things that we hope for in that we are certain of what we do not see as a result of the not yet character of eschatology” (Heb. 11:1). However, Botman (2001:75) explains, that the beginning of the twenty-first century comes with the assurance that the already of God’s reign outweighs the ‘not yet’ of its eschatology. After the destruction of Apartheid and the fall of the Berlin Wall a degraded eschatology arose whereby some look at the tragedies of history, the destruction of nature, the AIDS epidemic, and ongoing conflicts as signs of the Parousia which indicates the nearness of the “coming reign of God”. The faithful should now prepare to meet the “King”. This is not the first time that eschatology has been used to justify apathy. The category of hope has itself often led to quietism, passivity, and paralysis.

The gift of grace is something that one should wait for. One is then challenged to be patient and to endure suffering until it comes to pass. For Botman it becomes important to establish if there is a relationship between hope and action. And Botman lived for the fact that there is indeed a relationship between hope and action, and it is found in the Christian’s calling to discipleship. What becomes clear is that Botman stressed the importance of following Christ by emphasising that the claim of “Christianity is not that we have to follow Descartes or Plato or Martin Luther King Jr but Christ. The mission of the triune God calls for action in terms of the *imitatio Dei*” (Botman, 2001:75). It is God’s mission, and every action of humanity can only be a following of God’s example. The hope of a disciple is never one based on one’s own agency but on one’s following of the acting God who has acted then in Jesus Christ and now in and among us in the world. Botman still finds the acting in anticipation of what lies in the future too restricted as it upholds or promotes the eschatology of expectation rather than one of God’s action in the present.

This line of thinking falls victim to a surplus of the future and a deficit of the present. Being influenced by David Bosch’s idea of “hope as mission in action,” Botman (2001:76) argues that our Christian vocation exceeds the act of mere anticipatory hope. Rather our mission in the twenty-first century is to confess and live hope in action by following God’s way of living in our time. However, this does not mean living in a way of consistently referring to the line “what would Jesus do or have done?” in situations of decision-making but to allow the Spirit to transform the way we think about life and to allow the Spirit to inform our decision-making, which will determine the outcome of our actions.

For Botman this hope should be understood as action that is (a) “based on the new action of God in history; (b) rooted in the promises of God; (c) a conscious break from the frame of natural or social causality; (d) a critical challenge to Christianity and the church in the world and (e) a call to embodiment, it is an *imitatio Dei*” (Botman, 2001:76). Botman’s understanding of hope is based on the convictions that the final and most decisive foundation of hope resides in the belief that the prophetic action, the priestly death and reigning resurrection of Christ welcomed the reign of God into this world and continues to sustain it. This hope challenges us to return to the hope-giving ways of Christ and not to close ourselves in the vacuum of a form of hope that humanity has created from their own achievements but rather to conform to a hope that is outside the realm of human and nature. Botman directs us back to the cross of Jesus Christ which has been, according to him, interpreted and understood in a very one-sided way over the years (referring to the Anselmic way of seeing only the doctrine of God’s satisfaction in it, God’s satisfaction that all sins were atoned for) (Botman, 2001:77).

This one-sided interpretation and understanding of the cross rob it of its true significance and suffocates the true power of hope. The church has become accustomed to interpreting the cross only as an event of victory of good over evil but neglects and ignores the reality of Christ’s suffering and forsakenness on the cross, because it does not fit into the message of hope and renewal. For the church today to think of the cross in any other way than victory or salvation is not an option as it destroys the “perfect” message of the cross, as any other understanding of the cross-cause hopelessness and fear. However, Botman argues against such an interpretation and understanding. In his reference to Mark 16:8 Botman explains that Mark’s original conclusion of the cross is the most instructive conclusion for people facing the realities of today.

For Botman (2001:77) the challenges of poverty and lack of human development are real. We have become used to seeing the struggling of others bearing their crosses, but we choose to ignore it and look the other way because we have not yet learned and understood the deep meaninglessness and hopelessness that comes with the cross. For Botman it is time that we are called back to the cross of Christ and look at it from a place where the disciples and his mother saw it: the forsakenness, the suffering, the loneliness and the fear. Perhaps, looking at the cross from this perspective will strike us with the true understanding of meaninglessness and hopelessness. Only when we understand the cross in its wretchedness and forsakenness, loneliness and hopelessness, will we be able to understand the true meaning and significance of the resurrection as a hope-bringing and giving event.

This does not mean that the church and believers have no responsibility in living a life that resembles God's hope today. This hope, for Botman, does not thrive at the expense of human reason. This hope does not exclude the human initiative for a hope-giving way of living. This has been the mistaken perception of the church for many years, that we, the church and believers, have no role to play in eschatological hope other than to anticipate the future fulfilment of God's promise. For Botman discipleship is the Christian medium for living an eschatological hope. The hope that Botman advocates for is hope driven by God's mission through discipleship that pays specific attention to the poor and the marginalized. "This hope includes investment in religious leadership, theological education and studies that confess hope in action. This hope challenged Christians to take responsibility for enacting social hope" (Botman, 2001:79). This means that a confessing hope is a hope that confronts poverty, injustice, misgovernance and exploitation. The pursuit of Christian hope, explains Botman, in an era of global despair rests not so much on the potential of nature as on the potent commitment and faithfulness of God to creation. The church participates in this pursuit as representatives of God in the world through discipleship.

Botman's entire theology calls the church and the Christian community to their responsibility of discipleship. Influenced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Botman upholds the strong conviction that discipleship is the sacrifice of earthly life to a life devoted and committed to God's will and God's mission on earth. Thus, to be a disciple of God means to be in conflict with the unjust platforms of the world that disturb the peace of God. This does not mean withdrawal from the world and the realities that threaten it. What it means is not to conform to the world and its unjust systems but to influence this world to an extent so that it follows the just and righteous ways of God to break down the barriers between God and humanity that have been created by humanity's greed, power, wealth and self-interest. The incarnation of Christ was the beginning of God breaking into this world to first influence it. Second, this incarnational hope shapes the minds of people and finally it inspires humanity to transform the world for the better.

4.1.3 Incarnation and transformation

When one brings the incarnation into conversation with transformation one must understand the incarnation in its essence is a form of transformation. God in His divine nature took on human form for the sole purpose of salvation. The incarnation of the Logos teaches us the intended purpose of life. It educates humanity about God's will and how not to live. The incarnation of Christ was comprehensive, inclusive, open, pastoral, comforting and it

challenged oppressive and unjust powers and rulers, and these are the themes which make up an incarnational hope. God became human in Christ to be the companion of those who were trapped in poverty and who suffered under the oppressive powers of the elite.

Christ's ways of living, his ethics and his conflict with worldly powers transformed the way people thought about life and understood life. Thus, the nature of the incarnation is transformative, not just in the fact that the Word became flesh or that the word was transformed into being, but also, that the primary purpose of the incarnation was to transform the lives of people and the realities of the world. However, this means that the incarnation is a Christological category but also an eschatological and ethical category. The incarnation shapes the ethical way people were to live but it also has the significance of salvation. This means that God became human to teach humanity how to live, but he would die to save humanity from its sin and would give humanity new creation.

In his master's study Botman wrote on Berkhof's attempt to conceive Jesus intentionally and consistently on the part of human beings. He also emphasizes themes like faith in Christ, and the covenantal relationship between Christ and people. This covenant is the very point where people and Christ meet. He speaks of Christ "from in front as churchly experience; from above as divine intervention; from under as historical Jesus and from behind with an eye on the history of Israel" (Botman, 1984: v).

Botman explains that Berkhof urges the reader to think in covenantal terms (Botman, 1984: v). For Berkhof, to live a covenantal life with God calls for obedience and a righteous life. Therefore, Botman explains this is the form of commitment we ought to make with Christ so that we may live a life that reflects discipleship. This idea flows over from his master's thesis to his doctoral dissertation. His dissertation makes very clear mention of this covenantal act between God and people. He highlights the responsibility of people very much to the extent that people's obedience to this covenant (discipleship) would result in a transformative life. His study focuses on the situation of transition that bears the merging image of abolition and formation, remembrance and hope and of the already and the not yet.

Smit (2017:75) explains that the idea of transformation captured Botman's attention during his interaction with Bonhoeffer. He wrote in his dissertation that for Bonhoeffer it was important to talk about form, formation and transformation; for Bonhoeffer it was important to link transformation to the reality of God's will; he therefore wrote about the ethics of formation and reflected on the importance of ways to transformation. This influenced Botman to talk about a

Theology of transformation and liberation because it captures more adequately the name of the task at hand and the nature of the situation that calls us to it. Botman explains that we are engaged in the process of transformation of a society that exists in a particular socio-theological form (Botman, 1994:29).

For Botman this transformation and liberation can only take shape by following Christ and his Gospel. For this reason, Botman suggests a “transformational hermeneutic”. He saw the need for such a hermeneutic because he believed that we should first be transformed by the Gospel before we become involved in activities of liberation and transformation. Only then, he believed, will transformation become effective. He also affirms the affirmation of H. Richard Niebuhr and Dirkie Smit that before we enter into discussion of what we ought to do, what the need is, or what we are called to do, we must first establish what the will of God is among us (Botman, 1994:40).

Botman went on and explained that Smit preferred Richard Niebuhr’s opinion of transformation above all others as Niebuhr explains transformation against the backdrop of war. He explained that this reconstruction after war called not for withdrawal but for active participation in healing the wounds of the people and nation. Thus, for Botman, transformation always seeks to rebuild, heal, restore, renew, uplift, enrich, inform, educate and to comfort. Botman’s view of transformation had a pastoral tone to it. For him the focus should be on a paradigm of transformation that engages the nature and form of discipleship. Only then can transformation become a hope-giving matrix (Botman, 1994:40).

Botman’s main hypothesis was the imitation of Christ (*imitatio Christi*). What he did not mean was a direct duplication of Christ’s character but rather a particular way of living as Christians, which resembles the character of Christ. In his MTh. Botman (1984:12) explains that throughout scripture Christ represents hope through his constant presence with people. He healed the sick, gave food to the poor and marginalized, and the ultimate act of life, he died so that we could live. This life of Christ resembles hope. Botman argues that we should imitate this character by striving for justice and equality, uplifting the poor and oppressed, educating the disadvantaged and loving our neighbour. These acts are acts that bring hope to the hopeless. It transforms the way we think and act. We can bring Christ to life through the way we live out his Gospel. However, never must we assume divine authority; Christ is “pro-us” and will always be. He is the primary source of authority (Botman, 1994:83).

Transformation happens today in the first place as Jesus is taking shape in the church and public life. Here Botman refers to a community of disciples. This becomes even more interesting when Botman makes the statement that transformation is Christological and anthropological. By this, he means that anthropology becomes transformative by virtue of the fact that God took on our human form. In the transformative act, Botman explains, lies the meaning of discipleship. Since God took form in a human body, we should live as if God is part of us. We should strive towards a just and honest existence. We should become disciples (Botman, 1994:108). It is through a life of ethical responsibility that transformation manifests itself.

Botman summarizes his argument by writing that a special hermeneutical addition is the reading of history from the side of the poor and the oppressed. Dialectically, discipleship retains its Christological foundation but becomes in itself an affirmation of the call to join in the suffering of others. This, in turn, means that discipleship is to be regarded as transformation” (Botman, 1994:126). This means that in our very nature we are to promote the Christological element of our identity as it calls us to stand in solidarity with the suffering.

Finally, transformation is the name of a praxis of liberation that is demanded historically by a situation of socio-political transition with a specific orientation on ultimate obedience. A Theology of transformation is a Theology of good news. A Theology of transformation calls for a change in the form of things. In the Theology of transformation, the vision of the new form is pursued. (Botman, 1994:128). Botman proposes that a transformation should be Christological and vocational. His suggestion rests on the fact that a vocational paradigm should focus on the following of Jesus of Nazareth with the ultimate aim of continuing his liberating praxis.

Botman (1994:17) argues that the gospel of Jesus has primarily the shape of prophecy and good news to the poor. What Jesus had to say was news for his time and news about his time. Those times was different, and the imminent event was different, but the shape of the messages remains the same, even for us today. Faith seeks to understand the meaning of our times, the significance of what is happening in our own country and what God is doing in our history.

The Christian gospel is Christian because of what God was doing in and through Jesus. The good news about Jesus today is the good news about what He is doing as the risen Christ, through his followers. Botman explains that the good news is only to be found in praxis: our concern today is not to “know Christ according to the flesh” but to have “the mind of Christ”. Having his mind means that we confront issues today with the same Spirit that He faced and

confronted issues then. That, for Botman, is his theo-logic. We can teach Christ's teachings and preach his parables, but if we do not live it, we do no justice to the Gospel and the relevance of the Gospel is put into question (Botman, 1994:19).

As the supervisor and colleague of Botman, Dirkie Smit explains that Botman never pursued his Doctorate for academic prestige or to satisfy his academic curiosities but rather to respond to a question of Beyers Naudé, namely that the church should be made aware of the urgency for a new vision for the world after the destruction of apartheid (Smit, 2017:609). This new vision in its totality would stand in direct opposition to what apartheid represented: the injustices, the oppression, the inequality and misgovernance. This new vision would break down the barriers which caused division, and which forced people to the margins of society. This new vision would eliminate the barriers which established the rule that society should be stratified by status, prestige, power and wealth and that anyone who does not fit these labels would be excluded and oppressed. The Christ event, the incarnation, would give birth to this new vision.

Botman directs us to Bonhoeffer's "ethics of formation, which proposes a praxis-logic of transformation" (Botman, 2000:101). This transformation, which is grounded in Christology, has anthropological implications. This means that anthropology becomes transformative by virtue of the fact that God took on human form. The Christ event gave birth to Botman's views on transformation based on the fact that God became human through Christ and this ultimate transformation then results in humanity imitating the moral and ethical behaviors of Christ in order to transform our human situation of poverty, oppression and injustice. Botman calls this "liberation Christology" as it is the Christ event that inspires liberation from realities that bind us to damnation (Botman, 2000:101).

This theology of Botman's is a formative theology which is not different from his theology of transformative hope; rather formative theology is the formula for transformation or transformative hope. This means that its primary purpose is to shape our thoughts to inspire transformed actions that seek to heal broken individuals and communities and to reconcile these individuals and communities with God and with each other. This theology of Botman's resembles the characteristics of Christ and his nature. This theology is "communal, mediated, communicative, pastoral, public, historical, memorial, caring, healing, and restorative" (Marais, 2015: 204). These are the characteristics of Christ that the church should embody and live for.

4.1.4 Transformation and discipleship

Smit (2017:88) explains that Botman's theology was ultimately rooted in his pastoral concerns for those in need and particularly for the youth and the next generation, in South Africa, the global world, and generations often filled with despair. In his theological logic he would find a logic of hope, which involved confession and discipleship that called for personal and social transformation and for complex forms of obedience when facing complex and difficult challenges. This discipleship calls for actions and initiatives of unity and peace, reconciliation and forgiveness, justice and human dignity. It is in this discipleship that transformative hope finds its essence.

This point navigates us back to Botman's doctorate dissertation, which we will do often as his theology of hope finds its roots in his master's and doctorate. For Botman (1994:9) it was important to understand that the theology he tries to promote is ultimately rooted in the following of Christ. This theology reveals God as a God of justice who stands with those who are most wronged in situations of oppression and injustice. God reveals Godself in these situations through the church who live as his disciples, justly and obediently. Botman (1994:17) argues that the gospel of Jesus has primarily the shape of prophecy and good news to the poor. What Jesus had to say was news for his time, which means that it was instructive for the people to whom he spoke, and it gave specific guidelines for how these people should live. And it was news about his time referring to a lesson and instruction for a later audience on how he educated the people of his time and how a later audience should also follow this line of instruction for a better life today. This means that those times and circumstances may differ in some ways to our time and circumstances today, but the shape of the message remains the same, even for us today as the message of Christ addresses a moral and ethical way of living which serves the common good of everyone. For Botman the key to unlocking the transformative potential of humanity lies in the fact that we must become true and sincere followers and imitators of Christ (Botman, 1994:18).

Our initiative in transformation to bring hope is essential to Botman but he also explains that hope or transformation is never based on our own insights and power but in our following of the acting God who has acted then in Jesus Christ and now in and amongst us in the entire world. Botman refers to David Bosch who argues that "it may be correct to label our entire, comprehensive mission in the context of our eschatological expectation as 'action in hope'. We are called to confess hope in action. This confession is far removed from our idea that we can

save the world and ourselves by our own works” (Botman, 2002:27). That is the reason why we struggle with these issues in the first place, because we follow our own agendas and not that of God. For Botman it is important that we realise that we find our identity in Christ and not in human ability. “Our main mission is not to serve the church or people, but our mission is to be in the service of God’s outreach to the whole world” (Botman, 2008:14). For this reason, Botman moves to an idea of imitating Christ and through this imitation we live out our mission. Whenever the church adopts this way of life and embodies the characteristics of Christ in discipleship, hope is always the outcome.

4.1.5 Discipleship and hope

Marais explains that for Botman hope is “a precondition for sustainable livelihoods, fighting poverty, for seeking reconciliation and justice, to pursue peace in the world and to promote human dignity (Marais, 2015:201). Botman was very dedicated to the well-being of all human beings. He addresses many issues concerning human dignity and human development, with education being his medium of improving the human situation. He developed his pedagogy of hope to shine light on this new approach to human well-being and human empowerment. Plaatjies-Van Huffel explains that as an “engaged scholar Botman wanted to put the academic resources of the University to work in solving the pressing public problems of social exclusion of the poor from higher education, thereby contributing to the public good” (Plaatjies van Huffel, 2017:91).

Botman emphasised the importance of research, teaching, learning, and community interaction and in so doing, the social impact of research. For Botman the pedagogy of hope shaped Stellenbosch University’s positioning as an engaged institution of higher education. Botman practised his discipleship in the form of education as he understood education as an unlocking device, a device that would unlock endless possibilities of empowerment. However, it should be mentioned that this hope that Botman promoted was Christologically orientated and rooted in the will of God. This means that hope is found primarily in Christ and the potential of hope in education should serve the purpose of Christ.

This also means that an education vision informed in this way would not empower people to oppress each other but rather to liberate each other. Botman’s intent was to stress this understanding of education, to uplift people that are disadvantaged as it is the will of God to better ourselves and our neighbours. Botman (2010:2) explains that the Paolo Freire’s pedagogy of hope and pedagogy of the oppressed inspired his critical pedagogy of hope.

Freire's contributions are linked to the idea that education should help to transform the world, specifically empowering people to become agents of change themselves. It is a critical and progressive pedagogy of transformation. It seeks to transform broken realities. Freire argues that one task of a progressive educator is to unveil opportunities of hope, no matter what the obstacles might be. A political analysis of Freire argues Botman (2011:16), is one that leads to an understanding of historical, economic and social processes producing conditions that lead to despair and thus requires the unveiling of opportunities for hope. For the progressive educator, every educational moment is an opportunity to unveil hope.

Hope seeks action, hope leads to transformation in the various worlds that we inhabit. Botman (2011:15) explains that for Freire to hope and to dream is the one thing needed to improve human existence. The concept, pedagogy of hope, explains Botman (2009:11), has been adopted as a guiding principle in teaching, researching and learning. This philosophy rests on the idea that education and transformation are the driving forces that give birth to hope, which means that this vision is not an indoctrination of morally based reasons on how we should live and not live but rather it is education that encourages us to engage in the transformation of our human condition. It is education that calls us to actively use our knowledge and skills to serve each other.

For Botman hope is more than optimism: "It is a crucial imperative for the human condition and human survival" (Botman, 2009:1). Botman argues that one cannot have education without hope. Learning for Botman is not just imparting knowledge through teaching, it is a special process where you absorb, adapt and question. Botman believed that knowledge is the path to truth and enlightenment. Knowledge and education are the bedrock of human development. Without it, he stresses, "we stagnate, we become inert, and we founder" (Botman, 2009:1). For Botman this is all well and good, but his concern is captured in the question: what about higher education in our own country? (2009:2). For a long time, higher education has been seen as a luxury, something only for the wealthy, the elite, a crowning achievement to an education system that does not serve the primary needs of countries still experiencing the growing pains of independence from colonial shackles. From a traditional and local perspective, it has been argued that in developing countries, primary and secondary education is seen as the most important phases of education (Botman, 2009:2).

These phases are also the phases seen as those that contribute to "economic growth, elimination of poverty, malnutrition, poor social health and welfare services and ineffective governance.

At the same time, this assumption held that higher education and universities in Africa are of lesser importance and seen as a luxury for the privileged few with private benefit” (Botman, 2009:2). Higher education is understood here as having little to no impact in the struggle for poverty eradication and societal development through civil services. Primary and secondary schooling are considered as much more urgent and more important to development.

Botman (2009:2) however embarked on a mission to rectify these assumptions. For him, higher education is a critical pillar of sustainable human development worldwide. In today’s lifelong learning framework, tertiary education provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labour market but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, and social scientists. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, support civil society, teach, lead effective government and make important decisions, which affect entire societies. This just makes sense because tertiary institutions have deeper and insightful material to educate and create programs for practical exposure.

This pedagogy seeks to fix these broken realities. This cannot happen in isolation, explains Botman, it needs to happen in collaboration. Knowledge must be equitably accessible if we want to make a difference on our continent and in the world. Knowledge, if used wrongly, can also have the opposite effect. It is the cause of despair and suffering if not used for the right reason. Thus, Botman would suggest, before education we need to establish a platform of understanding education to serve the common good of humanity. If we understand that we ought to live a life that serves the common good of all humanity our education would become a powerful medium for transformation and a life-giving matrix for hope. For this reason, Stellenbosch University became the first African university to sign the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (Botman, 2010:2).

This seems appropriate in light of the fact that the idea of hope is embedded in all education. Education is empowerment through knowledge. It is the message of possibility over limitations, of opportunity over cynicism. It is the message of creation and creativity over destruction and of an embrace over exclusion. In order to produce graduates who can meaningfully transform society into welcoming spaces, you need to become the kind of institution where graduates of this nature can be nurtured (Botman, 2010:3). Therefore, to enable students to have these crucial experiences that will prepare them for leadership roles in

society, that is the most important thing we can do. We should expose them to research done and to the best thinkers of their time.

Even though we are not free of the dangers that come with such education, such education comes with great benefits. “Higher education creates higher tax revenue, increases societal savings and investments, generates entrepreneurship and has the ability to create gains in civil society, healthcare and efficient practicing of the law. Those who have a better standard of living are more inclined to embrace democracy and a human rights culture” (Botman, 2009:6). The fact of the matter is that higher education contributes to our private good. People are afforded better work opportunities with higher salaries and a greater disposable income that leads to a generally improved quality of life with associated enhancement in physical and psychological well-being. However, education can become a device of oppression and power abuse as well.

Thus, Botman finds it necessary to emphasise education as the privilege and gift from God, not to widen the gap between rich and poor but to create devices to close this gap. At this point in the argument it should be said that one of the difficult problems with various social educational efforts to correct injustice is to tie them to a distinctly Christian vision. Sometimes it seems that various Christian liberation movements assume that the goal of the gospel is greater financial distribution. Certainly, righting various inequalities and injustices in the world are about financial issues. However, the logic of capitalism sometimes seems to infect Christian visions of justice and restoration.

This is not what Botman aimed to communicate when he introduced his pedagogy of hope. Botman’s aim was justice and restoration but not with his vision on financial benefits or equal financial distribution. Rather, his vision was ethical, he wanted people to understand that when one is formed and shaped by the right principles and morals it becomes a virtue to share with those who does not have, to empower those who are disadvantaged and to give the same opportunities to those who had been refused opportunities to better themselves previously. For Botman reconciliation, and not wealth or money, would be the first step to rectify the social imbalance caused by past events.

4.1.6 Summary

This first section of this chapter steers us into the direction of God as the reigning God in history, the present and the future. Botman’s theology of hope is also based on the dual

dimension of the already and the not yet. However, different from Moltmann, Botman focus' specifically on the already on the present and the church and the Christian community's role in it. Botman understands the already, the Christ event, as primary to Christian hope as it is rooted in grace. The Christ event is not just an event of hope but of grace, referring to God being so gracious towards humanity because he does not want to see humanity perish, therefore he became human to set an example of how to live so that we may not perish but enjoy everlasting life.

Botman agrees with Moltmann on the point that despair and hopelessness is ultimately the result of sin and disobedience. The only way to set this right is to become true and sincere followers of Christ. Botman calls us out on our ethical and moral responsibility as Christians to live in ways that reflect following the example of God. For Botman obedience to God lays the foundation on which the relationship between hope and action is built and if we are to sustain these relationships, we need to be faithful to our Christian conviction of discipleship. Botman advocates for a sincere and true imitation of Christ as it is in imitating Christ that we realise our true calling and task on earth. To become imitators of God's word and Christ's character we must understand the cross in its totality, in relation to suffering and salvation. For us to be disciples of Christ we need to understand that the cross calls us not just to preach the good news of salvation, but it calls us to stand with and comfort those who are suffering. We must become their companion and their hope that good will come.

This is the new vision that Botman set out for the church to work towards. This vision resides in the Christ event, and the transformation of God to be human sets the example of what transformation should be. Its primary purpose is to liberate and not to oppress. Botman calls this an "ethics of formation", as the Christ event wants to shape us in becoming transformers of the world to its primary purpose. This formation and shaping of humanity and specifically the church, results in discipleship as the key to unlock the transformative potential of humanity. What this section explains, is that Botman's theology of hope is a precondition for sustainable livelihood, to promote human life and human dignity, to fight poverty and to seek reconciliation, as these elements constitute the message of the Christ event. This is where our education should start, with Christ; our discipleship should be informed by the ways of Christ, his life, message, cross and future reign. This is how we empower people, and this is how we ignite and fuel a hope that transforms.

Part 2: Hope Incarnate

4.2.1 Liberation Christology

For Botman discipleship that strives to effectively transform the world must start with Christ. We need to allow Christ to be the teacher at all times. We need to allow ourselves to be informed by his ways, the ways that evolve life into what Christ intended it to be. We need to allow Christ's enthusiasm and energy to drive and inspire us. In his master's study, Botman (1984:46) introduces Christ, in the words of Teilhard, as a universal Christ. With this, he meant that there is no limit to the good news of Christ. Christ's good news is not reserved for a specific group of people with a specific culture, ethnicity, race or gender. Christ, for Botman, is the deepest meaning of what this world ought to be. Humanity is created to answer to God's love through total obedience and devotion to their earthly task of realizing God's Kingdom on earth. "It is when people realize their responsibility set out by God, that they will use their freedom meaningfully" (Botman, 1984:68). By using the word 'meaningfully' Botman meant to liberate others from chains that bound them to a life that destroys the common good of humanity.

I want to emphasise this point by including Botman's argument of discipleship. He explains that a disciple's hope is never based on one's own agency but on one's following of the acting God who has acted then in Jesus Christ and now in and amongst us in the entire world. This means that personal agency and our initiatives, our motives and intentions, should be primarily based on and inspired by the life and ways of Christ (Botman, 2002:27). He refers to David Bosch who argues that it may be correct to label our entire, comprehensive mission in the context of our eschatological expectation as "action in hope". We are called to confess hope in action. This confession is far removed from our idea that we can save the world and ourselves by our own works. That is the reason why we struggle with these issues in the first place, because we follow our own agendas and not that of God. Such Christian hope is understood as an action that is based on the new actions of God in history. To confess hope that transforms means to engage with a hope that is at work in our lives, whether individually or communally.

4.2.2 Hope at work

Botman's ethical concerns is not separated from his theological concerns and convictions. Therefore, the relationship between ethics and doctrine in the church's confession of faith is crucially important for discipleship and obedience. For him it was important that our way of

living should reflect a life of total devotion and obedience to Christ. He would go on to argue for the imitation of Christ as pivotal to Christian hope.

This vocation of his was informed by commitment and by following Christ. It was important for him to see how Jesus Christ presented Himself in history and how his salvation liberated us from a life of oppression. This way of thinking directs Botman to the question of Bonhoeffer: “Who is Christ for us today today?” He found his new vision for a future community in the Christology of Hendrikus Berkhof. Botman also added another dimension to this vision of new community by meditating on part of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 7:29-31, where Paul argues that believers should live “as if not” (Smit, 2005:612).

They should live in this world as people who are not possessed by worldly ways because in Pauline logic the form of this world is being transformed to something new, something that is controlled not by government, not by people but by God. It is in these visions that Botman found his hope for the future. He was convinced that good existed in this world and that was what he worked towards, to introducing the good as a medium of transformative hope (Botman, 1994). Botman was concerned about the issues that cause division and separation amongst communities and wanted to rectify these concerns so that the coming generation would not have to deal with them. These issues of lack of unity, reconciliation, justice, of poverty, inequality and oppression were issues that Botman truly combatted as they stand in direct opposition to our ethical responsibility as disciples that need to transform the world. It should be said that Botman did not say that the past should be ignored but that it should be seen as an important tool to make sure that events that caused destruction are not repeated (Smit, 2017:81).

When Botman established the Hope Project he made it clear “that Stellenbosch University should be true builder of hope on the African continent, that it serves as a pioneer in its application of science in service of the community and that it can tackle some of the world’s toughest challenges through its proven strong points and knowledge to convert hope into action. Just studies were Stellenbosch University’s pledge to work for the poor” (Botman, 2010:13). For Botman, the university has three main responsibilities. We have a moral responsibility towards the poor, the rural communities and a variety of individuals in our country. We have a responsibility to face and address continuing problems of the 20th century and finally the responsibility to seize the challenges of the 21st century, a new generation of

young people, new ways of learning, and new opportunities for research and the use of budding technology.

The Hope Project was for Botman the medium through which these responsibilities would be met. According to Viljoen (2014:124) the important theme of the Hope Project was its practical side. Botman campaigned for researchers to do research that would make a difference, ones that are tangible. With the Hope Project, Botman asked the question, how science can be used to rectify what was wrong previously. It should be noted that Botman did not just refer to science to correct the past as it includes moral and ethical responsibilities to rebuild and address past mistakes.

For Botman (2012:2) the Hope Project is not just a way to identify the circumstances that need change and to accept them. This project has a more profound purpose; it seeks for solutions, and it wants to explore new possibilities and opportunities to transform these circumstances to something more beautiful. This study was Botman's way of making the University relevant to society. He wanted this study to inspire others to embark on the same journey of wanting to transform poverty into an opportunity for development.

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned the Hope Project, for Botman, was called "Hope at work". This indicates the fact that hope can only be real if it changes the circumstances of people living in poor conditions. He concluded his speech at the Hope Project launch by explaining that transformation is about relevance. This relevance can only be seen in healthcare, eradication of poverty, sustainability of the environment, to provide security of human rights and to promote human dignity. Thus, this means that we can only talk of hope if it changes our circumstances and if not, we have no use for it. It is of no help to us. These were the ultimate tasks of the university. This is translated in academic language as a "Pedagogy of Hope". This means that the University wants to create a new future for all people and especially for the future generation for they deserve better (Botman, 2010:2).

As we live in an era of fast scientific and technological development and progress, we must be careful how we speak of knowledge. Are we using our knowledge to build robots and control the weather, building weapons of mass destruction? Our knowledge results in these issues as we live to control the world to suit us rather than to live in such a way that the world becomes a home for all people and not a prison of hurt where hope seems to look like something in the clouds, or false optimism.

To summarize, the Hope Project was established to eradicate poverty and related conditions, to promote human dignity and health, to promote democracy and human rights, to promote peace and security and to promote a sustainable environment and a competitive industry. All of this, because Botman felt that “future generations deserve better”. It is necessary to say at this point, that Botman did not mention theology very often or did not talk much in theological language, when he spoke about his pedagogy of hope or hope study, but we can be assured of the fact that all of this was inspired by his theology, from the start to the end. Botman’s theology urged for agencies such as the Hope Project and it was also his intention to bring his theology to life in the most practical way he could.

This responsibility was translated by Botman as the beginning of a new Theology of transformation and of hope. Botman refused to become a prisoner of the past, whether personal or social; Botman always treasured and practiced the gifts of imagination and creativity, seeing possibilities where many others in similar circumstances were still unable to see any way into a new future (Smit, 2017:89). He urged for collaboration as it enhances the process of creativity and imagination. However, to remember our past is crucial as it becomes the medium through which we imagine a brighter future. The question still remains: Is hope relevant today and in what ways can we truly experience the relevance thereof?

4.2.3 Hope in question

“I inherited a first-rate institution, a tower of academic excellence and world-class research. However, it was clear that there were pressing needs in society all around us, caused by poverty and sickness and oppression and violence and pollution. We had to ask ourselves, what use would all our knowledge be if it did not make a difference to people’s suffering? Therefore, I called the University from success to significance. We had to become more relevant to society, especially to its most vulnerable members” (Plaatjies van Huffel, 2017:102). These were Botman’s words when he was first appointed Rector and Vice Chancellor in 2007.

We find in what he said much concern for the need of the University to become relevant for society. A concern that despite the prestige of the University we are still facing high levels of poverty and suffering. Botman would go on to address the relevance of the University many times. He constantly urged students to become agents of hope. He argued that this transformative power of knowledge should contribute towards the inclusion and dignity of all, not only for the self and for the just structures we long for and establish, but also for the healing

of communal life who in the end, is the fiber of dignified lives (Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 2017:102).

As already mentioned, Botman had a dream, which he repeated numerous times, that the farmworker's daughter and the farmer's son should equally easily gain access to the university. Botman therefore supported the recruitment of previously disadvantaged students as he had learned from a young age what the power of education holds. Botman often raised the question of universities' relevance in society. From the perspective of a pedagogy of hope, the answer is that the university should be a place of relevance. That means, applied to Stellenbosch University, that the university should be a place of meaning for the people in South Africa and the rest of the continent and world at large, a place that adds value to human life, a place that meets people in their terrifying situations and work towards changing them for the better (Botman, 2010:2).

The University is to contribute to a better standard of living also in stabilizing family lives and social cohesion. For Botman, those who have a better standard of living are more inclined to embrace democracy and a human rights culture. For Botman the words of American organizational theorist, Russel L. Ackoff, are paramount to his understanding of development and transformation. Ackoff argues that growth is not the same as development, and neither presupposes the other. For Ackoff, we can easily talk about growth, but do we grasp its meaning because for him a garbage heap can also grow but it does not develop. That is his point. Some nations grow larger without developing and others develop without growing. Growth is an increase in size or number whereas development is an increase in competence, the ability to satisfy one's needs and desires, and those of others.

Development is not a matter of how much one has but how much one can do with whatever you have. The garbage heap becomes the home for the poor. This is the kind of clarity Botman wanted to be realized. He wanted our relevance to be shown in what we do to improve circumstances in society and not be counted for in economic numbers but in progress (Botman, 2013:4). The question then is: what does progress look like when it is not attached to financial and economic growth? The answer for Botman was simple. For Botman, working towards communal life, unity, justice and peace would be the start of a process that inspires people, communities, and nations to develop a universal concern for people other than ourselves. This the progress Botman wanted. To establish a human culture of love and care, a human culture that takes care of the ecological wellbeing of the planet before financial benefits and gains.

With this in mind, Botman (2013:7) suggests a collaboration between centres of significance as they have played a crucial role in the history of knowledge. Collaboration becomes important as it enhances the quality of research, it improves effectiveness and financially it is more efficient. It is only through reading, sharing, criticizing and presenting ideas that they develop into meaningful human products. This collaboration is of utmost importance for Botman as it contributes to the visible relevance of tertiary institutions. Relevance forces the University to become visible in what they do in society, on the margins and the places where poverty is the biggest reality.

The argument for the relevance of universities lies in their ability to change the world through the medium of education and the sharing of knowledge. The demand in our transformation was for educational institutions to translate their relevance in society into the idea of how science and other disciplines can change society to a better world and living space. For Botman (2010:1) this relevance has universal implications, but in contexts such as South Africa and countries like in Latin America where poverty is a threatening reality, universities have an educational obligation as well as a moral one.

For the University to become relevant it needs to be open to all people so that it might be responsible for the empowerment and enrichment of all people and not just for a specific demographic or racial group. At this point of his argument, Botman (2014:3) uses the example of a girl who was previously disadvantaged. The University wants to empower this girl, especially in a world that develops so amazingly fast. Botman explains that it is clear to him that with the empowerment and education from the university, this girl will be a future leader. She will be the change maker of the moral system. This girl represents all girls. They will no longer be seen as only good enough to bring children into the world, but they will be the transformers of the economy. They will challenge patriarchal structures. They will build a new sense of human dignity. This way of thinking, explains Botman, will lead us into a new world, where a new diversity of engagement will take place that is foreign to us. What Botman had in mind was a multicultural university, one that invites differences, as it is these differences that will nurture us to build bridges and work together to make this world a pleasant place to live in for all. He did this specifically to oppose division and Afro pessimism.

Botman devoted himself to make this relevance felt in communities. He established the Rural Initiative with the intention of furthering development in rural areas. The Ukwanda Rural Clinical School is a cornerstone of this initiative. He also established a Legal Aid Clinic to

protect the rights of people. These and many more initiatives and studies were implemented by Botman to confront poverty, injustice and division and to promote empowerment and human dignity. One of his best developments would probably be the Hope Study which places this entire paper into perspective. The Hope Study is “Hope in Action”, it is “Hope that transforms”, and it is “Transformative Hope”.

4.2.4 Summary

The hope study is a practical outflow of Botman’s theology and thoughts. It explains what transformative hope is and what it intends to achieve. It would have been a mistake to equate Botman’s hope to a desire, just a wish that things will go better in future. To him it was much more. Hope had to be created, it had to sacrifice, and it had to be change in action (Viljoen, 2017:116). Many believed that this Hope Project refers to a theological foundation of hope as core element of Christian faith. For this reason, the Hope Project was questioned, often through a misrepresentation of Botman’s theological background. Many would motivate their skepticism with the phrase: “Don’t ministers belong on the other side of the Moederkerk?”

One can argue that this is a misunderstanding of Botman’s intentions and vision. Yet one can speak of a theological motivation underlying the Hope Project. However, this found expression in the educational vision linked to the eradication of poverty and related circumstances in our communities, and to promote human dignity and health, peace and security, democracy and human rights, and ensure sustainable environment and competing industry; it was to change the world through education (Viljoen, 2017:120).

To summarize, the Hope Project was established to eradicate poverty and related conditions, to promote human dignity and health, to promote democracy and human rights, to promote peace and security and to promote a sustainable environment and a competitive industry. All of this was because Botman felt that “future generations deserve better”. This responsibility was translated by Botman as the beginning of a new theology of transformation and of hope. Botman refused to become a prisoner of the past, whether personal or social, Botman always “treasured and practiced the gifts of imagination and creativity, seeing possibilities where many others in similar circumstances were still unable to see any way into a new future” (Smit, 2017:89). He urged for collaboration as it enhances the process of creativity and imagination. However, to remember our past is crucial as it becomes the medium through which we imagine a brighter future.

4.3 Botman on Hope Incarnate

4.3.1 Christology, hope and discipleship

Flora Keshgegian writes: “Jesus paid special attention to those who had reason to doubt God’s favour, the poor and the marginalised, sinners and those in need of healing. This is a hope that offered life and a sense of God’s imminent presence” (Keshgegian, 2006:25). This was one of the pillar arguments of Botman, that the example of Jesus Christ inspires discipleship. Discipleship for Botman is the result of a life embedded and devoted to hope that is inspired by the incarnation and driven by its vocation to transform and restore the world to what God intended it to be.

In his doctorate dissertation, *Discipleship as Transformation? Towards a Theology of Transformation*, Botman argues for discipleship that is Christologically informed. For Botman to transform the world in any way, whether, socially, economically or politically the mindset of the believer needs to be shaped and formed by and through constant engagement with the ways of Jesus Christ. Transformation calls for a renewal or reshaping of the way we think and live. Botman’s argument for formation through the Holy Spirit is very prominent as it emphasised the importance of understanding formation and transformation as something that takes shape through the Spirit of Christ. Bonhoeffer’s theology shaped Botman’s views on discipleship. For Bonhoeffer it was important to understand discipleship as an act commissioned by God. Botman took on this idea by arguing that whenever believers commit to discipleship they can no longer submit to worldly ways. They should not withdraw from humanity but not conform to its ways.

If one were to ask if Botman’s contributions help us understand a hope which is incarnated. Hope incarnate is hope that is embodied and which comes alive through human action, of following the example and ways of Christ. Discipleship is for Botman just that, doing things God’s way, liberating others from the bondage of violence, suffering, poverty and oppression but also consoling those who have been hurt and feels trapped in their despair. Discipleship is a life living in the footsteps of Christ marked by obedience to God’s laws, consistency in doing good and communion.

Because of his clear intention we have a clear platform on which we can build our interpretation of his work to its relevance and importance for us today. This last section of the chapter will now try to establish if Botman’s transformative hope is of any relevance to this study. At the

end of this chapter I will put together the theologies of hope by both Botman and Moltmann to see if there are any parallels between them for the sole purpose of proving that no matter what the context of their origin, or influence is, whenever we are to engage in a hope that is theologically grounded and eschatological, Christological, ethical orientated we will find countless parallels in its language, goals and practices.

4.3.2 Parallels to Moltmann's theology

In the beginning of this chapter I explained the difference between Moltmann and Botman's theologies. One is more theoretical and the other more practical. Both have been influenced by different contexts and situations which caused modern theological discourse to believe that there can be no link or relationship between their thoughts and theologies as they speak in different contexts and addressed different audiences. Moltmann's theology of hope may differ in context from Botman's but not in essence and content. Both scholars seek to promote the theology of hope as a theological theme embedded and grounded in the Christ event. Their eschatology's rests on the promise of God made in history and the future fulfilment of that promise. Both of their Christology's rest on obedience to God's law and word, following the consistent doing of good and revealing the pastoral character in Christ in the world. Both of their theologies advocate for an ethical way of living that would promote human life, human dignity and the common good of all creation. Finally, both their theologies are theologies that promote a hope incarnate, a hope that seeks to transform the human condition to the extent where all human life is valued more than wealth and prestige, a theology that seeks to make the presence of Christ felt in the present.

Having clarified more precisely what hope incarnate means, the task remains to apply these insights to the current religious and socio-political climate in South Africa today. It is to this task that I now turn to the language of hope in a post and delayed transformation South Africa.

Chapter 5 – The question of hope in a post-delayed transformation South Africa: Incarnate hope and timeful hope over against cheap hope

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to address the promise and pitfalls of the search of a Christologically shaped hope as challenge to reductive misunderstandings and interpretations of hope as these misunderstandings and misinterpretations of hope prevents us from responding faithfully and effectively to contemporary challenges. The background of this study is formed by questions such as: What is its relationship between hope and societal issues such as poverty, wealth, injustice, poor-governance, and inequality, and our (the church) response there to? Given the problem, this chapter wants to establish what the specific contributions from Moltmann and Botman are in this regard? What form could an account of Christian hope take that is informed by their work? From these above questions this study engages with the central question: *What theological insights can be gained from Moltmann and Botman in the search for the contours of an understanding of Christian hope that does not lead to inaction but inspires transformative action?*

This last chapter draws greatly from what Moltmann and Botman attempted to do with the language and speech of hope in their responses to the question of reductive understandings and cheap speech of hope by proposing a hope that is incarnated, embodied, Christologically grounded and timeful. This chapter draws from chapters three and four to suggest and propose a hope that is active and at work throughout history, in the present and future. In chapter two the question about reductive understandings of hope has been discussed and explored. The framework of this chapter will consist of a response to these reductive understandings of hope by defining incarnate hope as a theologically grounded concept. Based on this definition, the second part of this chapter will propose a timely hope in opposition to these reductive understandings of hope. This timeful hope includes a threefold approach to hope namely hope and memory, hope and imagination and hope and transformation. This timeful hope will be the foundation on which the application of incarnate hope is built within a South African context by continuously reflecting on the insights of Moltmann and Botman.

This chapter will then conclude with the exploration of an incarnate/embodied hope in a South African context, where the discourse about transformation and hope are still majorly influence by the ghosts of apartheid which include, betrayal, trauma, oppression, injustice, pain, disempowerment, division, deprivation and suffering. This chapter also acknowledges that one should not and cannot talk about hope without acknowledging these aspects. Other voices are invited to this chapter, motivating what has been drawn from Botman's and Moltmann's contributions to incarnate hope, to speak to this particular matter with the aim of shaping the hope this study wants give birth to. These voices are those of Allan Boesak (*Dare we Speak of Hope? Searching for a language of life in Faith in Politics*, 2014) and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's, an eminent scholar, who chairs the research body of historical trauma and transformation studies at Stellenbosch University (*Dare we Hope? Facing our Past to find a new Future*, 2014).

This chapter wants to understand incarnate hope in a South African context and for that reason these voices speak to the heart of this chapter as these scholars speak from a South African context. They all understand that in order to talk about a hope that is active in its attempt to bring transformation and change to a country, continent and world in which hope seem to be nothing more than mere optimism, fiction or even a fantasy, specific themes must be acknowledge. These themes include justice, reconciliation, righteousness, unity, memory and imagination. These two voices understand that it is important to not limit these themes to either a theological or political discourse but that any discourse accounting for issue of justice, reconciliation, righteousness, unity, memory and imagination should be done in conversation with both theology and politics as their natures are of both.

These two scholars will lead us with the related questions: Dare we Speak of Hope? (Allan Boesak) and Dare We Hope? (Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela). These questions were asked by these scholars in their unique quests for a hope that seeks to change the condition of the country. These questions all invite responses which is radical in their address but pastoral in their approach. These questions will lead us to explore possible answers which will paint a clear picture of the hope this study wants to encourage and promote. Before a language of hope can be established that is effective in its attempts to change our responses to reductive and cheap speech of hope we must first address and attend to these cheap speeches of hope.

The next section of the chapter will explore these cheap speeches and develop a language of hope to counter these cheap speeches. These responses will be further explored by Moltmann

and Botman's contributions to formation and transformation which will open the discussion of incarnate hope that will be led by Ingolf Dalferth's insights on Christology. These insights of formation and transformation which is inspired by Christology will then lead us to a timely hope which will ultimately help us in answering the two question; dare we speak of hope and dare we hope, by using the concepts of and incarnate and timely hope.

5.2 Countering cheap speech of hope

In chapter one the question about the importance of the language of hope emerged. Chapter one poses a great challenge to this study by asking questions about how hope is understood, talked about and ultimately lived out in church, academia and society today. Throughout this study the insights of Moltmann and Botman led us to possible answers to these questions. This section of the study seeks to establish how a specific language and speech of hope helps us in either living it out effectively or do we contribute to these misconceptions of hope. This section also wants to find affective responses to challenge cheap speech of hope. One of these responses is drawn from the insights of Botman.

Botman made a significant contribution to the "apartheid is a heresy" discourse, which sufficed greatly in the late 1970s early 1980s. In this discourse people like Botman did not only address apartheid and the despair it brought but they also proposed possible ways on how to heal and restore from it. The result of these conversation resulted later in the publication, *To Remember and to Heal: Theological and Psychological Reflection on Truth and Reconciliation* (1996) which was primarily about reconciliation during the transitional period to democracy. This collection of essays on how to remember apartheid and how to heal from it has as its context the vision of the TRC. Botman's contribution to this publication is titled, "Narrative Challenges in a Situation of Transition". In his chapter Botman make some statements that is parallel to the problem of this study. Botman alerts his readers about the different speeches of hope and how it can either become a locking device which imprison one to the past and the trauma and despair that comes with it or it can be an unlocking device which unlock narratives that invites imagination of change and transformation. Here, Botman recognize the importance of how we talk about hope, which this chapter will focus on as a response to chapter one. Botman's argument starts with the remembrance of the past. What I found intriguing about Botman's discussion on memory and healing is his language of the metaphorical locking device. He explains that in calling issues of justice "emotional", "sensitive" and "delicate" we lock and

even block out the narratives of pain and despair, narratives that is needed for healing and reconciliation.

These words became the “metaphorical locking devices” of apartheid theology and its supporters. Botman calls them “metaphorical locking devices” because they were used to close the debate rather than to open concrete issues for public discussion. “Once an issue was pronounced “sensitive and emotional”, we all knew it actually meant: “Let’s not talk about it any further or allow any further discussion on the matter” (Botman, 1996:38). Chapter one of this study argues that hope has been used to silent the crying voice of people in despairing positions. Thus, hope would also be seen as an emotional locking device if it is talked about in this way.

Those who fought against contextual theology by using these “metaphorical locking systems” were very serious about it. They used them also in their local faith communities, in their local churches. Nobody was allowed to address these issues which lay behind the “metaphorical locking systems”. Pastors or ministers were effectively silenced. Issues of justice in their own churches were effectively made invisible and the decision-making bodies of their churches were prophetically blind, deaf and mute. This was very dangerous because: theology is born in the local community; it is nurtured there and, unfortunately, it is sometimes “locked up” there; “metaphorical locking systems” not only close the doors on justice; they also build new doors to private theologies that empower the individual and destroy the community” (Botman, 1996:38). Members of churches where these devices were dominant often find it difficult, if not impossible, to relate to others and the otherness in people. A “metaphorical locking system”, especially when it is used in the survival of a race, class or gender, not only locks others out, it also locks oneself or one’s own group in. People went further than their local churches. They took the “metaphorical locking systems” home and applied it to their own children and spouses.

Subsequently, their own children became blind, deaf and mute to the issues of contextually, justice and liberation. In fact, they lost sight of the truth in their own country. These insights bring Botman to acknowledge the power of speech and language of hope as the implications thereof becomes greatly visible in how we live and response to confrontational challenges. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is the most fundamental challenge to the power of these “metaphorical locking systems”. “The commission challenges everybody to come to terms with a storytelling community, where the old “metaphorical locking systems” are being unlocked by the stories that come to them from behind these devices” (Botman, 1996:39). These

narratives invite communities and individuals anew to a process of formation and transformation. The language we use to talk about hope is mostly influenced by how we are spiritually formed and transformed. The way we are formed and transformed spiritually contributes majorly to how we respond to cheap language of hope and how we promote hope that is incarnated and timely.

5.3 Formation and Transformation as Response to Cheap Hope

Before we engage in this discussion, we need to understand what incarnate hope means. This chapter will commence with some insights from Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer is a German theologian and pastor. Bonhoeffer showed strong resistance against the Nazi-regime and spoke out against it very strongly. He is one of the most studied theologians of the modern era for his profound contributions on the role of Christianity in the secular world. His ground-breaking book, *Discipleship*, has been studied by many contemporary theologians such as Moltmann and Botman. Bonhoeffer influenced both Moltmann and Botman's understanding of the relationship of formation and discipleship to living hope.

In the manuscript "Ethics as Formation" in Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* he explains the important role of understanding the human nature of Christ and the participation of the church in the life of Christ. Bonhoeffer also explains how the church ought to think about the life of Christ and how the church should be formed by this way of life in Christ. Bonhoeffer (2015:93) explains that the formation here means something different to what we would expect it to mean. It is not primarily concerned with formation of the world by planning and programs, but it is in all forms concerned and based on Jesus Christ. This does not mean that the teachings and Christian principles should be applied directly to the world in order to change or form the world according to them. Rather, "formation occurs only by being drawn into the form of Jesus Christ, by being conformed to the unique form of the one who became human, was crucified and is risen" (Bonhoeffer, 2015:93). "What was at stake was not a matter of place, time, climate, race, individual, society, religion or taste, but nothing less than the life of humanity, which recognized here its image and its hope" (Bonhoeffer, 2015:96).

It is at this awareness of human life in Christ where Christian ethics starts. For Bonhoeffer (2015:98) to talk of ethics as an authentic part of human life, it cannot be seen apart from the formation towards the form of Christ. Meaning that before we engage or attach our lives to moral and ethical principles we need to first be formed by and through the form of Christ. Christ does not teach an abstract ethic that must be carried out. Christ was not essentially a

teacher, a lawgiver, but a human being, a real human like us. Accordingly, “Christ does not want is to be first pupils, representatives and advocates of a particular doctrine, but real human beings before God. Christ did not, like an ethicist, love a theory about the good; He loved real people. Christ was not interested, like a philosopher, in what is generally valid, but in that which serves real concrete human beings and the full of creation.

Christ was not concerned about whether the task of an action could become a principle of universal law, but whether my action now helps my neighbor to be a human being before God as God did not become an idea, a principle, a program, a universally valid belief or a law; God became human” (Bonhoeffer, 2015:98). Thereby we are turned away from any abstract ethic and toward a concrete ethic. “We can and should not speak about what the good is, can be, or should be for each other and every time, but understand that we are first of all real human beings who receives the form of Christ and second how Christ takes from among us today” (Bonhoeffer, 2015:99).

Based on this, Bonhoeffer, makes it clear that ethics as formation, is the venture of speaking about the form of Christ taking form in our world neither abstractly nor casuistically neither programmatically nor purely reflectively. For Bonhoeffer when we are transformed into the form of Christ, where this formation happens, concrete commandments and guidance are given, for which obedience will be demanded. Ethics as formation is possibly only on the basis of the form of Jesus Christ present in Christ church. The church is the place where the form taking of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and where it happens. The Christian ethics stands in the service of this proclamation and this event. This idea is strongly shared by contemporary scholars who is interested in the same teaching.

In chapter one the study introduces an article by Wessel Bentley with the title “Post-secular democracy and the reign of God: Reading Habermas and Moltmann in South Africa” (2015). In this article Bentley made a number of relevant remarks as he draws from Moltmann’s *Ethics of hope* to propose a framework for responsible citizenship in South Africa. This responsible citizenship grows out of a life of discipleship and obedience to the laws of Christ. Bentley (2015:4) argues that Gods kingdom is in its very nature one of freedom. This means that even though humanity as the authority to exercise freedom, the kingdom of God invites humanity to exercise its freedom by choosing a form of life that is productive for the building of communities and relationships. In addition to this, Bentley explains that for Moltmann “God

does not reign ‘from the top-down’, but the reign of God is manifest in and through the community, which participates in God’s community-building project” (Bentley, 2015:4).

Therefore, Bentley, along with Moltmann and Botman, strongly agrees with this understanding of Bonhoeffer and they also acknowledge that in order build communities on these grounds one needs to be engage in the daily challenges of the communities that are to be build and rebuild. Thus, Bentley understands that Moltmann’s theology is “profoundly political in its orientation and requires from religious traditions a recognition of their roles in civil society” (Bentley, 2015:4). Bentley goes on to argue that for Moltmann Christian ethics is primarily an exercised ethics, which requires context. There is no other context for the Christian to practice their faith (and ethics) than the existential realities in which they find themselves. Christian ethics should first and foremost put its stamp on a form of living which accords with Jesus’ way of life and his teaching. Thus, to speak of Christian ethics or the formation thereof is a question of identity and the authentic expression of this identity within a particular context.

These arguments bring Bentley to the conclusion that for Moltmann responsible citizenship derives from the example of Christ. However, for Moltmann responsible citizenship does not mean that this term should be generalised to mean ‘Christian citizenship’ for the entire population. “For Christians to be responsible citizens means to speak about the Christian role in contributing towards the reign of God, suggests a third alternative namely an engaging church” (Bentley, 2015:5; Moltmann, 2012:35–44, 60, 231–234). The church in a democracy needs to be an active and trusted entity, which contributes positively to society as a whole. Democracy depends on trust; without trust, everything falls apart. “Trust is won through truthfulness and strengthened by honesty. An engaging church, in accordance with its Christian ethics of hope, offers a message that is transformative and advancing in nature. Using Christian language, transformation is termed, salvation” Moltmann (2012:37). An honest, engaging church, according to Moltmann (2012:37) offers the following four messages of salvation, whilst holding itself accountable to the same:

1. Salvation takes effect in the struggle for economic justice and against the exploitation of human beings by human beings;
2. Salvation takes effect in the struggle for human dignity against political oppression by other human beings;

3. Salvation takes effect in the struggle for solidarity against the alienation of human beings;
4. Salvation takes effect in the struggle for hope against despair in individual life. Without social justice there is no political liberty; without political liberty cultural alienations cannot be overcome; without cultural identity there is no personal hope and vice versa.

What we get from both Bentley and Bonhoeffer, is that to be formed or transformed in becoming a responsible citizen or a bearer of hope in a world threatened by evil, some form of change is needed. This study proposed a hope that seeks to bring that change. Change in the way we think about being human and being a Christ follower. This proposed hope starts with the incarnation of God.

5.4 Incarnate Hope as outcome of Moltmann and Botman's response

What does an incarnate hope mean? An engagement of this question was presented by Ingolf Dalferth in his book, *Crucified and Resurrected: Reconstructing the Grammar of Christology* (2015). Dalferth (2015:4) argues that the incarnation is the pivotal soteriological message of the Christian hope. If this is the case, if Christ is to be understood as the one who accompanies people in their suffering and offers them rest and healing, liberation from oppression and exile from bondage, then Christ must be understood in solidarity with humanity and their experiences and not as a Christ who saves humanity in his absence. Dalferth goes further by explaining that the incarnation is not to be seen as an event with its significance in the past, but rather as a continuous event happening daily in the life of the church. The church needs to resemble the leadership of Christ and must become the teacher of the gospel to the world. "If Christ was the locus of God becoming human, then the church is the locus of the continuous presence of the incarnate one in the present" (Dalferth, 2015:4).

The incarnation not only serves as the basis of the Christian faith, it is also the medium through which we understand the world's intended purpose, and the endless possibilities it holds for a better future. The incarnation teaches us how to access these possibilities by allowing the message of the incarnation to work through us in the world. This means that we need to understand God as being present in the world and not as a God who is somewhere above the world. The incarnation teaches us that we need to seek God in our midst as that is where he lives. God is at work in every component of this world, in human culture, science, nature etc. Thus, these components need to be understood as helpers of Christian faith so that, in the light

of the incarnational concept, “there will eventually be a relationship of unbroken harmony between modern culture and Christian faith” (Dalferth, 2015:5).

For Moltmann it is in Jesus Christ, his nature, work and message that humanity reached a definitive turning point in understanding themselves, life and the world. Because in his human existence, Christ gave expression to what humanity ought to be. It is in the incarnation that we find what Moltmann calls true humanity. Which means that in the Christ event there is no differentiation between Jew and Gentile, bond and free, man and female. For Moltmann (1967:141) this is the God who made himself known as the God of the Old Testament who liberates His people from exile and whose nature is to fulfil the promise of universal glory and salvation in the future. “It is only when the real, historic and religious differences between people, groups and classes are broken down in the Christ event that there comes a prospect of what true humanity can be and will be” (Moltmann, 1967:142).

In addition to the above explained Dalferth maintain his argument that the incarnation is not only the foundation of the church, it is also the key to understanding the world. As the incarnate Word, Christ is at work in the whole creation in nature as well as human culture and science. God is to be sought in the world and not in heaven. We need to live in such a manner that God becomes visible on earth in how we care for each other and promote the dignity of all creation. We should embody Christ` teachings in our lives. This teaches us that if Christ is God made flesh, then his earthly life provides insight into Gods being (Dalferth, 2015:5). Throughout his argument it becomes clear that Dalferth recognizes time very much in his explanation of God becoming human. It is not just something that happened in the past and have no implications for the present and future.

Thus, this study concludes that when one talks about a hope that is Christologically grounded and incarnated, one talk about a hope that cannot be bound or confined to one era or time but a hope that is timeous and timeful in its effects. These arguments rest on the fact that the message of Jesus is not limited to one time or era but exceeds boundaries of time. Thus, if we are to talk about a hope that is shaped by Christological groundings we are to talk about a hope with the same purpose and characters as that of the Christological message of the gospel. We are to talk about a hope that is timely, timeous and timeful. A hope that invites past memories, a hope that awakens the awareness of lament and despair in the past and present, a hope that encourages one to imagine a better future and a hope that puts imagination into agencies which engages in positive transforming actions.

5.5 Timeful hope: memory, imagination and transformation

In 2015 Robert Vosloo presented his inaugural lecture as Professor at the theological faculty of Stellenbosch University entitled “Time in our Time: On theology and future-orientated memory”. Vosloo (2015:3) explains in the introduction of his address that the past is not simply the past tense, but it is actively present in our memory and our imagination, it lives in a positive and negative way in our bodies, thoughts and dreams. He explains that theology today has to take into account shifts with regards to the reconfiguration of the relationship between past, present and future. Therefore, he explains that part of the task of theology links with a continuing reflection on “time words” such as memory and hope. I particularly appreciate Vosloo’s concept of “time words” because he acknowledges hope as something that stands in close relation with time and for hope to be understood as a theological concept it must be understood as something that is timeful in its very nature. This chapter wants to specifically emphasize this point.

5.5.1 Hope and Memory

In order to achieve the proposed outcome of this study, this section of the study navigates us back to chapters three (Moltmann) and four (Botman). This study seeks to propose a hope that is Christologically grounded. For that reason, both Moltmann and Botman find it essentially important to revisit the past and to allow our memory to shape the way we address the present and future. Memory is of importance because it suggests ways of dealing with the past in order to heal from it.

In his “The Living Reminder: Service and Prayer in Memory of Jesus Christ”, Henri Nouwen explains that the forgotten cannot be healed and what cannot be healed can destroy. What would’ve happened to humanity if Christ didn’t die? Remembering the past opens up a new future. The cross, passion, death and resurrection. Our deepest feelings of joy, pain, grief, satisfaction and disappointments are not simply dependent on our life events but on the ways, we remember these events. The events of our lives are probably less important than the form they take in the totality of our story. Different people remember a similar event differently. Memories of fear, anxiety, alienation and loneliness are often hidden and not talked about. These hidden memories escape healing and cause much harm in the process. Our first response to our undesirable memories is to forget them. Remembering is the beginning of freedom from the covert power of the remembered thing. So also, when our memories remain steeped in fear, anxiety or suspicion the word of God cannot bear fruit (Nouwen, 2009:17).

By hiding part of our story, not only from our own consciousness but also from God's eye, we claim a divine role for ourselves; we become the judges of our past and limit mercy to our own fears. Thus, we disconnect ourselves not only from our own suffering but also from God's suffering for us. This teaches us that when we fail to remember or neglect the importance of memory, we make it impossible, for ourselves and for others, to become agents of hope and healing (Nouwen, 2009:26). To prevent this fear of the past and its inhumane and unjust characters, Vosloo suggest that the shifts in the experience of time (throughout history) requires continued reflection on what we ought to change in order to not repeat what hurt us, we must be consistent.

Dirkie Smit introduces memory as a fundamental activity of Christian faith. In every worship service, the Christian community remembers. We remember the good news of the gospel. We remember the story of Christ's life, suffering, death and resurrection. Christian worship is rooted in remembering. God urges us to remember, to commemorate, and the congregation is reminded and exhorted to remember, to celebrate, to be renewed and transformed, and to love God and others. As a major part of this act of remembering, the worshipers are also called to confess. We confess who we are, we confess our guilt, we agree with God's judgement, and we confess our faith and trust in God's promises (Smit, 1996:97). Thus, our confession must be informed by our intention to do what Christ came here to do. We confess what we believe but our confessions are only materialized when we live what we believe. Thus, confession contributes majorly to the process of formation and transformation as it constantly reminds us of what we belief and how we ought to live out what we believe. Therefore, memory helps us to continuously revisit our form of Christianity and how this form is constructed by and through the life and work of Jesus Christ.

We agree with Gods ways, but we still choose to live a life not suggested and prescribed by God. This is where we need to rethink our ways and move towards life of imitating Christ, so that our confessions shape our way of life with others and with God.

Botman, in his contribution to the book *To Remember and To Heal*, draws from the American theologian Richard Niebuhr. Botman explains that for Niebuhr the Christian revelation helps Christians to interpret the past, the present and the future. Without revelation, we interpret all three of these in terms of "the evil images in our hearts". With respect to the past, revelation helps Christians in three ways, according to Niebuhr. Firstly, it makes the past comprehensible. Secondly, the revelation in Christ urges us to remember what we have forgotten. Thirdly, it

helps us also to make the past of others our own. (Botman, 1996:98). Christ should be our common memory.

Botman (1984:48) refers to God as the Alpha and Omega, explaining that God has been with us throughout history. We find traces of God's presence in the darkest of times and that presence was the light that prevails over despair, evil and suffering. Thus, it became important to not deny the memory of what happened in the past, no matter how bad it was, but to embrace it as it stirs our imagination and helps us to reflect on a better future. God's presence becomes our ray of hope throughout history.

The grand motive for this pastoral action process is the restoration of people's humanity. It is to assist the nation to, "put the lights on", and to admit the extent to which it has violated the humanity of its people (Botman, 1996:157). Only when our memories become part of how we understand our current situation, can it influence the way we imagine a different today and tomorrow.

5.5.3 Hope and Imagination

Smit (2017:89) explains that Botman used the gift of imagination and creativity to discern possibilities for a better future. He did not ignore the past but used it as a medium to stimulate his imagination to envision a better future for generations to come. Botman (2004:15) further explicates that a fresh approach should be found in which people are invited to imagine hope in the midst of hopelessness, in accordance with Paul Ricoeur's argument that people are changed, not by ethical urging but by transforming imagination. Such transformed imagination must mean the development of an imagination of hope.

Botman studied Walter Brueggemann's studies on hope in the prophetic tradition. He argued that for Brueggemann, people in situations of crisis need leadership with prophetic imagination. They require leaders who can imagine God's presence in their predicament and the hand of God in the making of hope against hopelessness. "Prophetic imagination provokes new realities in communities, it gives birth to new actions in society because it has learnt to imagine that God is doing a new thing in the city" (Botman, 2004:15). Poverty and injustice displayed daily can exhaust hope and even crush hopeful imagination. This is when people need prophetic imagination.

Botman (2001:78) explains that we are invited to imagine the future by seeing new, surprising divine acts in this, worldly history. We are now challenged to embrace the ideas of the future

and hope beyond the end of a mere belief in the natural unfolding of a created order or technological climax of reason. This means that we need to look beyond the order of reasoning and technology, which came with the dawn of enlightenment, but still seek to imagine the divine creativity to make the world a better place without the need for reason and technology but with hope and faith. A faithful embrace of hope does not arise from the ashes of natural theology or from divine historical precedence but from the awakening to a hope for a future that is manifested in the very idea that God has a future.

Botman often referred to the coming generation, and the importance of creating a world in which they could flourish. However, Botman stresses the importance of imagination that is inspired by God. He does so because he understands that imagination inspired by God is pure, well-intentioned and imagination that has the best interest of humanity at heart. At the beginning this study introduced incarnated hope in the words of Moltmann. He emphasizes the essential role of imagination in the process of hope that seeks to challenge cheap and reductive speech of hope and promote a hope that is active in its attempt to transform humanity and society to its created orders. Without a dream and imagination, this task becomes instantly complex and difficult.

Botman was inspired by Martin Luther King's dream to bring freedom and justice; this dream was stirred by his imagination for a better world and throughout history, Dr. King Jr.'s dream gave hope to millions of people to become part of projects and campaigns to fight poverty, inequality, oppression and to promote human dignity, justice and equality. That is the power that imagination holds, and it is rooted in God's pure love. Imagination brings transformation to life. Without imagination today, there will be no future tomorrow. This is the starting point of transformation: we imagine a better life today to make it happen tomorrow. Tomorrow holds the key for a better and renewed life; tomorrow, transformation awaits us.

5.5.3 Hope and Transformation

Drawing from chapters three and four we can now conclude by saying transformation starts with oneself through the power of the Holy Spirit. The incarnation of God is a form of transformation in itself. Thus, true transformation, according to Moltmann, starts with an individual's willingness to subject to the ways of God who became human so that we can relate to God's ways. I want to refer back to Moltmann's, *The Coming of God* in which he explains that the "first effect of eschatology is personal faith; new life in his world follows, and out of that springs the hope for the redemption of the body and the expectation of the transformation

of this whole world into God's kingdom" (Moltmann, 1996:x-xvii). Moltmann's explanation of transformation also include Gods presence in all spheres of time.

When God stepped into time to become human, he exceeded the boundaries that limit humanity to a single location and allow humanity to gain knowledge of the past and stirred the imagination of humanity to envision an eternal future. With God stepping into the present came the timeless acts of love and faith which is grounded in the absolute present. This means that in Christ, God disclosed a new future and God is present where we wait upon his promise of hope and transformation. Moltmann explains that "when we have a God who calls into being the things that are not yet, then the future also becomes thinkable because it can be hoped for" (Moltmann, 1967:30).

Botman (1996:154), in turn, reminds us that our sons and daughters are facing a different and new future. Our preconceptions and our neural lines of communication are being tested as a new nation is being born. Our knowledge and our pastoral skills are fundamentally challenged by this new reality. We need, therefore, to reconsider the questions of types and forms of pastoral care in the life of a nation in search of its past in order to build its future. We are challenged with a reality so fundamentally new that existing forms of pastoral action require a revisiting and transformation. It requires an ecumenical and corporate process if we really mean to serve the rainbow nation in a way that will not only heal individuals but actually take a nation from division to unity, from fear and violence to community and liberation.

His outspoken beliefs that transformation is possible, informative and necessary were driven by his passion for moral responsibility, justice, human dignity and formation of life. Botman directs us to Bonhoeffer's "ethics of formation, which proposes a praxis-logic of transformation" (Botman, 2000:101). This transformation, which is grounded in Christology, has anthropological implications. This means that anthropology becomes transformative by virtue of the fact that God took on human form. The Christ event gave birth to Botman's views on transformation based on the fact that God became human through Christ and this ultimate transformation then results in humanity imitating the moral and ethical behaviors of Christ in order to transform our human situation of poverty, oppression and injustice. Botman calls this "liberation Christology" as it is the Christ event that inspires liberation from realities that bind us to damnation (Botman, 2000:101). However, taking into account this timeous understanding of hope alongside the cheap speech of hope the question still remains, can we talk about hope as it is so complicated, sensitive and complex especially when we talk about in our South

African context? This study is assisted by the question of two South African scholars who grappled with the same question.

5.6 Dare we speak of hope or Dare we hope?

In their quests to understand hope in South Africa both Allan Boesak and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela asked the questions: Dare we speak of hope? (Boesak) and Dare we hope? (Gobodo-Madikizela). Both of them attend to their respective question against the backdrop of apartheid. This part of the study will explore the answers to their respective questions. These answers will be explored alongside the response of this study to hope and the understanding thereof in South Africa to see how can complement and strengthen the answers of these scholars to bring to light a more Christological language to the different contours of hope.

5.6.1 Dare we Speak of Hope?

The year 1994 marked the dawn of new age in South Africa. For the first time in the history of South Africa a democratic election for state leadership was granted, which meant that all citizens, whether white or non-white, had the opportunity to vote for a governing party of their choice. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was elected as the first democratic president of South Africa. This event was the first spark of light after an era of darkness. This was a hope giving event for South Africans of colour who was bared and imprison under the sword of apartheid which left them with a choice of compliance to the government or suffer persecution or even death.

This was a transforming moment in which the non-whites, who for so long was being oppressed, felt for the first time that they really mattered. Boesak explains that for “black South Africans, this transition marked the end of three and a half centuries of struggle against colonialism, dispossession, despoliation and racist oppression and the beginning of a fresh, non-racial, democratic and meaningful future” (Boesak, 2014:3). For South Africans of colour this meant freedom from bondage. The 1994 event marked the start of their Exodus narrative out of Egypt. This was a moment in South African history that defines *hope* for its citizens, especially those of colour. More than two decades later we are faced with the question; how did we get here? From a joyful and happy moment in 1994 to a time where the intentions and motives of that same liberating event are questioned. In the words of Boesak, “It seem as if apartheid’s dark immoral shadow has returned to threaten the rainbow nation” (Boesak, 2014:5).

Boesak (2014:6) explains that for South Africans, justice (social, gender, sexual and racial), so treasured in the constitution, remains painfully elusive in our politics and our social and economic policy framework has not achieved real economic transformation, wealth distribution, or eradication of poverty. Our social and economic inequalities are devastating and make us one of the worst offenders in the world. The clashes between government and poor township communities, and between government and trade unions are becoming more frequent even more protracted, and even more violent.

One of the major concerns of the post-apartheid South Africa is that the majority of government and presidential cabinet are black people and the people who they are supposed to serve are struggling the same fate as they did in apartheid. For many South Africans today the “governing party (African National Congress) did nothing much as reminds us disturbingly of the apartheid regime” (Boesak, 2014:7). Boesak uses the Marikana murders of August 2012 as an example of the ongoing struggle for justice. He explains that the governments immediate and natural reaction to the Marikana murders was not to protect the workers, “which they claim to represent”, rather the governments first priority was to protect the mine owners as most of them has direct interests in the mines as co-owners.

For Boesak (2014:7) the government didn’t protect the workers in any way, whether it was to stand with the workers for better wages, better working conditions, protecting the working rights or to secure a better future for them and their families instead the government justified the brutality of the police and to protect the profits of the wealthy and mine owners. This event and so many more resemble so much of what apartheid was and its effects of the poor. This way of governing has resulted in the countries unbearable statistics of crime, poverty, underdevelopment, diseases and illnesses, poor service delivering and economic growth.

Boesak gives us insight into answering of this question. He explains that before we can talk about hope the church and believers must take a number of actions. First, he explains that the state must be questioned at to the legitimate character of its action. The state must be held responsible for what it does. Second, the church must obey its responsibility to shelter and serve the victims of the action of the state even if they do not belong to the Christian community. Finally, the wounds of the victims should not just be bind and cover but the wheel and devices which causes these wounds must be seized and destroyed (Boesak, 2014:16).

Boesak explain that “there is nothing unreal about injustice, indignity and oppression and there is nothing naïve about justice, dignity and equality and the struggle for a better world. The

sickness that is eating away at our politics is its alienation from humanness, its fear of spirituality of politics, its inability to connect with the core of our human-being-ness” (Boesak, 2014:27). For Boesak this is the reason why politics fails to serve the poor, heal the broken and acknowledge where help is needed, because they have denied political as a condition of the heart. For Boesak we can only speak of hope if we take into account the emotions that comes with it. Boesak uses the words often attributed to Augustine of Hippo, that we can only speak of hope if we speak of her two daughters, anger and courage. As we are angry at the way things are but courageous to see that it won’t stay the same. Hope then is no longer a philosophical idea but it is being personalized as it is part of life, it is a living concept with living characters.

5.6.2 Dare we hope?

In her book of collective essays *Dare We Hope? Facing our Past to Find a New Future* (2014) Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela addresses the issue of our South African past in order to seek a future for our country in which all may be recognized as dignified human beings who bears hope. Her book underlines the question of our decision making and actions after a dark era of apartheid which is synonymous for hatred, rage, grief, trauma and suffering. She is determined that “the decisions we make and the actions we take, how we deal with our past and memories of the past today, will determine whether we use our pain, our grief, and our outrage to move forward to what is the only lasting solution for our country” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014:1; included from a speech by Nelson Mandela on 10 April 1993).

Gobodo-Madikizela (2014:1) introduces another perspective by explaining that white people are increasingly negative about everything the economy, crime, affirmative action, and a government run by a cabinet that is mainly black. These negative attitudes are a screen against confronting the reality of their contributions to apartheid, a system that oppressed the majority of South Africans for the enrichment of a few, and their status as beneficiaries of its privileges. Perpetrators continue to struggle with the effects of public shaming and of being exposed as the doers of evil deeds. “These were places black people were forbidden to go”, says my mother as we approach a restaurant in an upmarket Cape Town shopping mall says Gobodo-Madikizela. And now we can come to the same places as whites, walk into a café, and pay the same money just like that. “For some white South Africans mingling with blacks in urban malls is a welcome change from the racial isolation of the past. Some are simply resigned to this post-apartheid reality, and merely tolerate the presence of black people in these places. But for others, the

appearance of black faces in spaces that were previously reserved for whites is seen as an invasion of what belongs to them – things they worked so hard to build their pride their fatherland. This has evoked bitterness and unleashed their wrath and violent outrage” (Gobodo-Madikizela 2014:7).

This possibility of shared humanity with others is captured in the words of Steve Biko who wrote that: “we have set out on a quest for true humanity, and somewhere on the distant horizon we can see the glittering prize. Let us march forth with courage and determination, drawing strength from our common plight and our brotherhood. In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible- a more human face” (Gobodo-Madikizela 2014:22).

For Gobodo-Madikizela (2014:151) the guiding principle of Biko’s vision are based on morality that is other-directed, concerned with promoting the ethical vision of compassion and care for others. By locating the responsibility for a more caring and humane society in ourselves, Biko seems to be calling us to respond not with the force of righteous entitlement to freedom of speech but with the moral force of compassion and care for others. If memory is used to rekindle old hatreds, it will lead us back to continuing hatred and conflict. But if “memory is used to rebuild, or to begin new relationships that is where hope lies” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014:22).

Gobodo-Madikizela (2014:125) explains that in some cases people have called for a forgetting of the past as it opens old wounds. But she also explains that the memory of the long-traumatic injustices cannot be silenced. However, remembering can become a very dangerous device if used with the wrong motives. She explains, that for some, digging up the past is a senseless exercise that turns back the wheel of history, perpetuates victimhood, and undermines a future-orientated political vision. It is true that the emergence of collective memory of victimhood into public discourse may reignite hatred of historical enemies. For people who want to forget the past, however, remembering threatens their deepest sense of humanity because of the memory of what they did or did not do, of their complicity or their silence. In contrast, populist politicians often articulate, in powerful language and imagery, the sense of growing frustration among people for whom nothing has changed, because they have not tasted the fruits that political transformation promised.

These discourses advocating a model of remembering that flirts with the most destructive aspect of memory which is revenge. With time, continuing the trend he has started is bound to ferment into anger, confrontation and revenge. This is why South Africans need an alternative way of remembering the past of a new model or approach to remembering the past. “We need a new public discourse that is imbued with moral possibilities and a sense of responsible citizenship- to face the past in order to gain perspective about the present, including a capacity for understanding the experiences that confront many young people whose lives have not been touched by the waves of economic opportunity that have been rolled out in the name of black economic empowerment” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014:125).

The reality of facing historical injustices is that it is not always easy to confront the past because facing it may uncover difficult truths. Yet avoidance of the past is no longer an option for us South Africans. Therefore, the quest for dialogue about the past is a quest to convey the aspiration of preventing discourse driven by hate and building an alternative legacy of a nation in conversation about the past in order to build responsible communities and a more human future (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014:126).

5.6.3 We dare to hope and speak of hope?

Based on what we have discussed regarding the above two questions, this part of the study will conclude with its contribution to these answers. This study concludes that we can speak of hope and we can even dare to hope but we need to do so by hand of a few important things. This study wants to conclude that in learning the language of incarnate hope one must unlearn the language of arrogance, pride, power and, which in turn means learning the language of woundedness, compassion, love and companionship. I especially appreciate Boesak’s contribution to the discourse of hope as he speaks of hope primarily in relation to Christ and the message Christ preached and lived in the Gospel. In his attempt to answer his question, Dare we speak of hope? Boesak draws much from Moltmann’s Christology. For Boesak as for Moltmann Christ had his own politics, which was care, compassion, companionship, love and the promotion of human life. This politics of Christ is deeply emphasised by Botman in his arguments that Christ’ mission was to save and to liberate. Thus, for all three scholars Christ is the person through whom our understanding of hope should be born.

Boesak strongly affirms the above statement when he for instance argues that to see the world through the eyes of those who suffer is to see the world through the eyes of Jesus. When we see the world through the eyes of Jesus, we understand his discontent and “outrage with the

injustice, the relentless oppression, the scandalous exploitation of the poor and vulnerable” (Boesak, 2014:64). When we see the world through the eyes of Christ and the eyes of the suffering we see and acknowledge the longing and cry for justice and peace, and we finally come to understand the extend of the damage that we are causing.

Thus, we can dare to hope and dare to speak of it only if we engage in this world like Jesus did, by working towards forgiveness and reconciliation with the same love that Jesus did. We can only hope if we are discontent with the humiliation and assault on God’s creation and His children and if we act on setting things right. We can only speak of hope if we are courageous enough to stand where God stands, in service of those who are being wrongs by power and manmade systems designed to exploit.

We can dare to speak of hope “only if we remember that we are participants in Jesus’ mission of fullness of life for all creation. Only if we remember that this is not our project, our plan and our vision but that of Jesus in which we are called to participate in” (Boesak, 2014:65). If we long for justice and peace. It is only through such heart transplant that we can talk about hope incarnate in South Africa. This study thus concludes that we can speak of hope only if it is Christologically grounded. Only if the hope we speak about, speak about Christ and Christ’ way of life. Only if this hope resembles the character of Christ. And only if we speak of a hope that is timeful. If the hope we speak about does not resemble the Christological principles of the incarnation, the eschatological principles of our faith, the ethical principles of Jesus’ life and the timeous nature of Christ’ life and message, it is a hope that we do not want to speak or preach about.

Conclusion

This study addresses the issues of reductive uderstandings and interpretations of hope in church and society as these reductive understandings of hope leads to inaction and ultimately it results in a lack of transformation and change in our human condition. Action can either evoke hope or despair. How we live in relation to other determines whether we bring hope in our actions of kindness, love, compassion and companionship or do we bring despair in our actions of greed, violence, injustice and ill-governance? This study came to the conclusion that when we understand hope reductively, we fail to become bearers of hope. Rather, hope becomes something we use to silent the cries of people in depair. This study challenges this cheap hope by promoting a hope that is Christologically grounded. Hope that informs our actions to be hopeful in nature. This study suggest that we understand hope through the eyes of Christ. When

hope is lived out in discipleship, we become agents of transformation. Transformation that seeks promote human life and the common good of all creation.

First of all, this thesis commenced with a great challenge. The basis of this study is the hope, hope that challenge injustices and ill-governance, greed, power, exploitation and oppression. However, for the disciplines of theology and ethics to really materializes such hope it needs to face the challenge of contemporary interpretation and understandings of hope which seems to suffocate the true essence and meaning of hope. Therefore, this study started by addressing these deficient and misinterpretations of hope in order to emphasizes and establish a more Christological orientated and grounded hope, a hope that is actually active in serving the common good of humanity and the earth. This hope that is rooted in the promise, life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus would become the hope that inspires not just the church and the community of faith but the entire humanity to challenge the way we live from a self-centered way of living to a more communal and considerate way of living. This hope would remind the church and all believers of their responsibility as commissioned communities by God to do the will of God and to follow the ways of Christ.

This task would have been a very demanding and complex one if it was to engage without some contemporary insights from the leading thinkers of the topic of hope. Therefore, this thesis engaged with the thoughts and theologies of Jürgen Moltmann and Russel Botman, who both invested and devoted a significant amount of their time and studies to promote and advocate for a hope that seeks to serve the common good of all creation and which would be grounded in the eschatological, Christological and ethical foundations of Christian belief.

These three foundations would ensure that the intentions and motives of hope are based on the Christian task as given by God. These foundations would also promote a hope that is wired together in faith and love. These foundations would form the pillars of a hope that is incarnated. Thus, this study unfolds and explore the theologies of both Moltmann and Botman on the basis of these three theological themes as foundation of a hope incarnate.

One significant discovery that this study made was the fact that for both Moltmann and Botman a hope that is rooted in these three themes would never succeed in its goal and purpose if it does not remain obedient and consistent to the ways of Jesus Christ, as it is in obedience and consistency in doing the right things (the things that Jesus set out for us to do) in life that we give birth to hope and which sustain hope.

Only when obedience and consistency are primary to the agenda of hope that hope becomes a medium through which transformation takes place. This would become the devices which would guide South Africa into an era and time where transformation does not just apply to those in power but to every human being. Transformation which is based on justice, equality, the promotion of human dignity and human life. This would be transformation that brings to life a new creation in which the common good of all creation and humanity is strived for.

This understanding of hope was tested to see if it holds the potential to bring about change and transformation in the social, political and economic realities of our lives today. Thus, this thesis devoted the last chapter to explore hope incarnate in the South African context, by investigating the extend of transformation after apartheid. This approach would force the study to explore the South African political conditions in and after apartheid in order to ask about the role of hope in these different eras. Thus, the goal of the chapter was to intimate towards how transformation would look in South Africa today if it were to be done on the basis of an incarnated hope. The chapters came to the conclusion that in order to materialize transformation that is liberating to all people, that serves the common good of all people and that aims to transform the living conditions so that all people may have a good quality of life, the country's political and governing system needs a heart transplant.

This means that the governing body and the political system needs a different way to see the world. They need to see and understand the world and the people through the eyes of Jesus Christ. It is only when this happens that they will consciously understand what they are doing wrong and how their ill-governance and abuse of power are destroying the lives of innocent people and children and even the earth. It is only when we see the world through the eyes of the broken, the hurt and the suffering that we really see the need for changing the way we live with other people and the earth. This study wants to remind the church of its title as hope bearers and that they have the responsibility to follow the same example as Christ as this is the way that leads to life, joy, positive growth, transformation and flourishing. Hope incarnate provides the guidelines to a life that is obedient and consistent in following example of Christ as it sees the wellbeing of all humanity priority over any form wealth, power or dominance, and puts forward the call to become servants for Christ on earth, serving each other in love. We conform to the character of Christ in order to embody hope, to live hope and be hope rather than to see hope as something that is other-worldly.

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